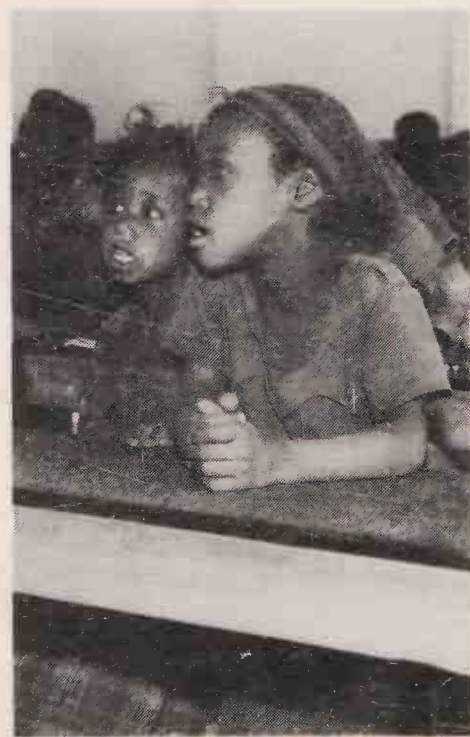


ETHIOPIA

Transition and Development
in the Horn of Africa

Mulatu Wubneh and
Yohannis Abate



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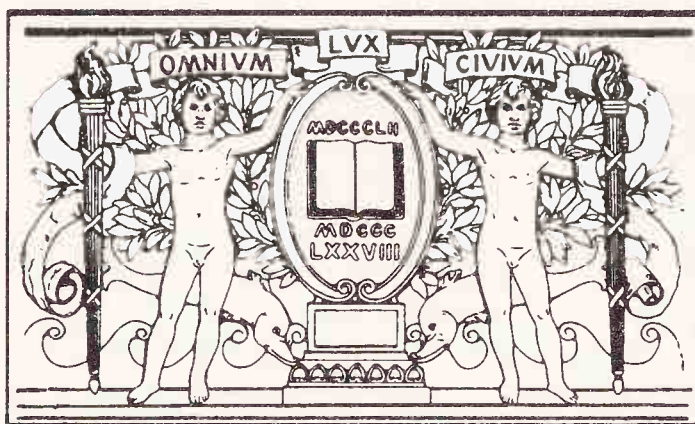


A land that is part legend, part tragedy, Ethiopia long has captivated the imagination and recently has elicited the compassion of the outside world. Yet despite the many accounts—the romantic tales of monarchs recounted by travelers, the graphic depictions of famine relayed by journalists—knowledge about Ethiopia's political, social, and economic realities has been limited and often contradictory.

In *Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa*, Professors Wubneh and Abate detail Ethiopia's passage from an imperial-feudal system to one of state socialism. With this change in governing systems have come fundamental changes in government policy, economic objectives, social programs, and international relations. This transition began in the 1960s with the opposition to imperial rule, a development that led in 1974 to military intervention and, ultimately, to the social and economic upheaval that resulted in the recent formation of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The authors trace the social change, in the process discussing the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the population and gauging the effects of urban development, education, and famine. Reviewing the post-1945 trends in economic growth, Professors Wubneh and Abate also examine the economic policies—such as land reform and industrialization of industry—of the new socialist government in terms of their potential to reduce regional inequalities and the urban-rural dichotomy.

Against the more familiar backdrops of legend and famine, Professors Wubneh and Abate present here a concise and current overview of a nation in transition. Focusing on the realities of Ethiopia today, the authors assess the nation's place in the international community in light of the 1974 revolution, which reversed the country's position from a pro-Western stance to a strong alliance with the Soviet Union. They also consider prospects for change and stability—the chances for resolution of ethnic tensions, for the success of current economic and social programs, and for the reduction of superpower tension in the Horn of Africa.

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ABOUT THE BOOK AND AUTHORS

A land that is part legend, part tragedy, Ethiopia long has captivated the imagination and recently has elicited the compassion of the outside world. Yet despite the many accounts—the romantic tales of monarchs recounted by travelers, the graphic depictions of famine relayed by journalists—knowledge about Ethiopia's political, social, and economic realities has been limited and often contradictory.

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ETHIOPIA

Transition and Development in the Horn of Africa

Mulatu Wubneh
and Yohannis Abate

Westview Press • Boulder, Colorado

Avebury • London, England

Profiles/Nations of Contemporary Africa

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Published in 1988 in the United States of America by Westview Press, Inc.; Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher; 5500 Central Avenue, Boulder, Colorado 80301

Published in 1988 in Great Britain by Avebury Gower Publishing Company Limited, Gower House, Croft Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3HR

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Wubneh, Mulatu, 1945–

Ethiopia : transition and development in the horn
of Africa.

(Profiles. Nations of contemporary Africa)

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Ethiopia—Politics and government.

2. Ethiopia—Economic conditions. 3. Ethiopia—
Social conditions. 4. Ethiopia—Foreign relations.

I. Abate, Yohannis. II. Title. III. Series.

DT382.3.W82 1988 963 87-10700

ISBN 0-86531-426-8

British Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Wubneh, Mulatu

Ethiopia: Transition and Development in the horn
of Africa.

(Profiles: Nations of contemporary Africa).

1. Ethiopia—History

I. Title II. Abate, Yohannis III. Series

963 DT381

ISBN 0-566-05643-7

Printed and bound in the United States of America



The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of the American National
Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1984.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

To Wienshet, Kinde, and Helmae
—M.W.

To My Mother and
the Memory of My Father
—Y.A.

Contents

<i>List of Tables and Illustrations</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
1 <i>Geographical and Historical Setting</i>	1
Environment and Resources, 3	
Origins of the Ethiopian State, 9	
The Making of Modern Ethiopia, 12	
Haile Selassie's Era, 17	
Notes, 23	
2 <i>Opposition to Imperial Rule</i>	29
Ethnic and Regional Separatist Movements, 29	
Rise of Opposition to Imperial Rule, 33	
Military Intervention and the End of Imperial Rule, 42	
Summary, 46	
Notes, 47	
3 <i>Military Rule</i>	51
Politics, 51	
Organization, 59	
National Unity, 68	
Summary, 75	
Notes, 76	
4 <i>The Economic System</i>	78
Economic Policy Under Haile Selassie, 79	
Ethiopian Socialism, 90	

Programs of the <i>Derg</i> : The Rural Economy, 92	
Programs of the <i>Derg</i> : The Urban Economy, 102	
Postrevolutionary Changes, 107	
Summary, 118	
Notes, 120	
5 <i>Population, Culture, and Society</i>	126
Ethnic and Cultural Characteristics, 128	
Population and Health, 134	
Urbanization, 138	
Education, 141	
Women in Ethiopia, 146	
The Social Hierarchy: Traditional and Changing Criteria, 151	
Literature, Art, and Music, 153	
Summary, 157	
Notes, 158	
6 <i>International Relations</i>	162
Neighboring Countries and the Arab World, 165	
The United States and Western Europe, 173	
The Soviet Union and the Socialist World, 181	
Summary, 187	
Notes, 188	
7 <i>Prospects for Change and Stability</i>	192
Prospects for Democracy and National Unity, 193	
Prospects for Economic Development, 196	
Prospects for Reducing Regional Tension, 197	
Prospects for a Viable Socialist Ethiopia, 198	
Notes, 203	
<i>Appendix: Programme of the National Democratic Revolution (PNDR) of Ethiopia</i>	205
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	211
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	213
<i>Index</i>	216

Tables and Illustrations

Tables

4.1	Gross domestic product, 1960/61–1973/74	82
4.2	Estimated production of major crops	99
4.3	Changes in real income of manufacturing employees	109
4.4	Gross domestic product, 1974/75–1982/83	111
4.5	Balance of payments, 1974–1982	113
4.6	Central government finance: Summary	115
4.7	State budget, 1983	118
5.1	Population in 1984	135
5.2	Comparative data on health and demographic statistics, 1984	135
5.3	Population growth of major urban areas, 1970–1984	139
5.4	Enrollment in primary and secondary schools as percentage of school-age group, 1970–1983	145

Maps

Ethiopia	xvi
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1.1	Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa	4
5.1	Ethiopia: Ethno-linguistic groups	129

Figures

3.1	Socialist Ethiopia: The political system, 1984	60
3.2	Organization of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, 1984	62
4.1	Retail price index, 1974–1982	110
4.2	Foreign trade and current account, 1975–1983	114

4.3 Government finance, 1975–1983	117
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Photographs

Tis Abay (Tisisat) Falls	5
Kurt Jansson visiting a relief camp for famine victims	5
Cattle at a major local market	8
Kereyu shepherds and their herd of sheep and goats	8
Community group clearing area for road construction	10
Camels as a major means of transportation	10
Africa Hall, Addis Ababa	22
Meeting with UN high commissioner in Eritrea	31
Head of Ethiopian Orthodox Church performing rites	127
An Oromo family taking their morning meal	129
Men stack wheat for storage	130
Man from southeastern Ethiopia	130
A literacy class	143
Children attending classes	143
Women harvesting chickpeas	149
Worker inspecting a machine	150
A wedding ceremony	155

Preface

Ethiopia occupies a unique position on the African continent. It has maintained itself almost continuously (except for the Italian invasion of 1935–1941) as a multi-ethnic and independent political entity.

Today Ethiopia faces a major challenge brought about by fundamental changes in its political, social, and economic system. The conflict between the traditional and the modern groups that was simmering in the 1960s exploded into a revolution in 1974, resulting in the formation of a socialist state. The transition from a feudal and imperialist system unleashed forces that almost tore the country apart.

Ethiopia has been in the news since 1974 when Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by a group of junior military officers. His overthrow was triggered partly by his government's cover-up of a massive famine that claimed the lives of thousands of peasants. The famine was primarily caused by drought, but the catastrophe had been predicted months in advance and the government had failed to heed the warnings. International relief agencies in Addis Ababa, the capital city, did not announce the famine, for fear of antagonizing the host government, until the international press told the world about the unfolding human tragedy.

Ten years later, in 1984, a similar situation developed, and the crisis was played out on television screens in millions of homes in the United States and Western Europe. The 1984 famine had been going on for well over two years before the world was shocked by the scale of this human crisis as shown in a brief filmstrip by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) depicting the famine and its victims. Before a massive relief program was mounted in November 1984, over 300,000 lives had been lost, and about a hundred people were dying every day in relief camps. The relief operation was complicated by the war in northern Ethiopia (the area most affected by the drought), by political debate (particularly concerning Ethiopia's alliance with the Communist world), and by the lack of infrastructure such as roads, port

facilities, and airplanes. In spite of these difficulties, the international relief effort attracted not only government and church-related humanitarian organizations, but people from all walks of life, including school-children and artists expressing their highest human ideals.

How did a regime that had been in power for over twelve years and had seized power to right the wrongs of the Haile Selassie government succumb to the same failures, resulting from insensitivity and bureaucratic inefficiency, that were the hallmarks of its predecessor? Although the military government has introduced some basic social and economic reforms, its most consuming tasks have been the consolidation of its power and the maintenance of national unity. A large part of the national resources have been devoted toward meeting the challenges these tasks present.

Our objective in this book is to analyze the transition of the Ethiopian state from imperialism and feudalism to socialism. After presenting a general background on the country's history and geography, we proceed to critically analyze recent developments in Ethiopian government, economy, society, and international relations. Although many of the problems in the transitional period are carryovers from the imperial regime (such as ethnic tensions), others (such as the deterioration of the economy; exacerbation of regional tensions in Tigray, Gonder, and some of the Oromo areas; and refugee problems) are creations of the new government itself.

In the introductory chapter, we deal with the historical and geographical background and the nature of the imperial-feudal system of government. In Chapter 2, we examine the growth of opposition to the imperial government—specifically, challenges from ethnic and regional movements and confrontation by students, trade unions, and the military. These challenges to imperial rule, which had their beginnings in the 1960s, crystalized and eventually led to the 1974 revolution and the overthrow of the Haile Selassie government.

In Chapter 3, we analyze the role of the military government and its radical political reform. The military instituted many radical programs, but it also alienated a large segment of the civilian group by its refusal to establish a representative government. In 1984 the military government announced the formation of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE). A constitution was approved by 81 percent of the registered voters in February 1987, clearing the way for the creation of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. (This took place in September 1987 as this book was going to press. Ethiopia is now under a civilian government with Mengistu Haile Mariam as president.) In Chapter 4, we analyze the economic system, beginning with post-World War II trends in economic growth, agriculture, industrial development, external trade, and finance.

The economic policies of the new socialist regime—such as land reform and the nationalization of industries—are examined in terms of their impact in reducing regional inequalities and their potential to promote economic development. Chapter 5 is devoted to a general discussion of ethnic, cultural, and demographic characteristics, health conditions, urban development, education, women in society, and the role of literature, art, and music in Ethiopian society.

Ethiopia's relations with the international community in light of the 1974 revolution are examined in Chapter 6. After the revolution the country reversed its position: Its pro-Western stance was replaced by strong alliances with the Soviet Union and Cuba. In this section we also look at Ethiopia's relations with its neighboring countries. In the concluding chapter, we examine Ethiopia's prospects for change and stability: specifically, prospects for democracy and national unity, prospects for the success of economic and social programs, prospects for reducing regional tension in the Horn of Africa, and prospects for a viable socialist Ethiopia.

The transliteration of Ethiopian place-names, personal names, and words is always a problem. No standardized and universally acceptable system exists. In these circumstances, we have tried to use the most commonly employed spelling systems for personal names and for words. For place-names we relied on the transliteration system used by the Ethiopian Mapping Agency in the *National Atlas of Ethiopia*, 1981.

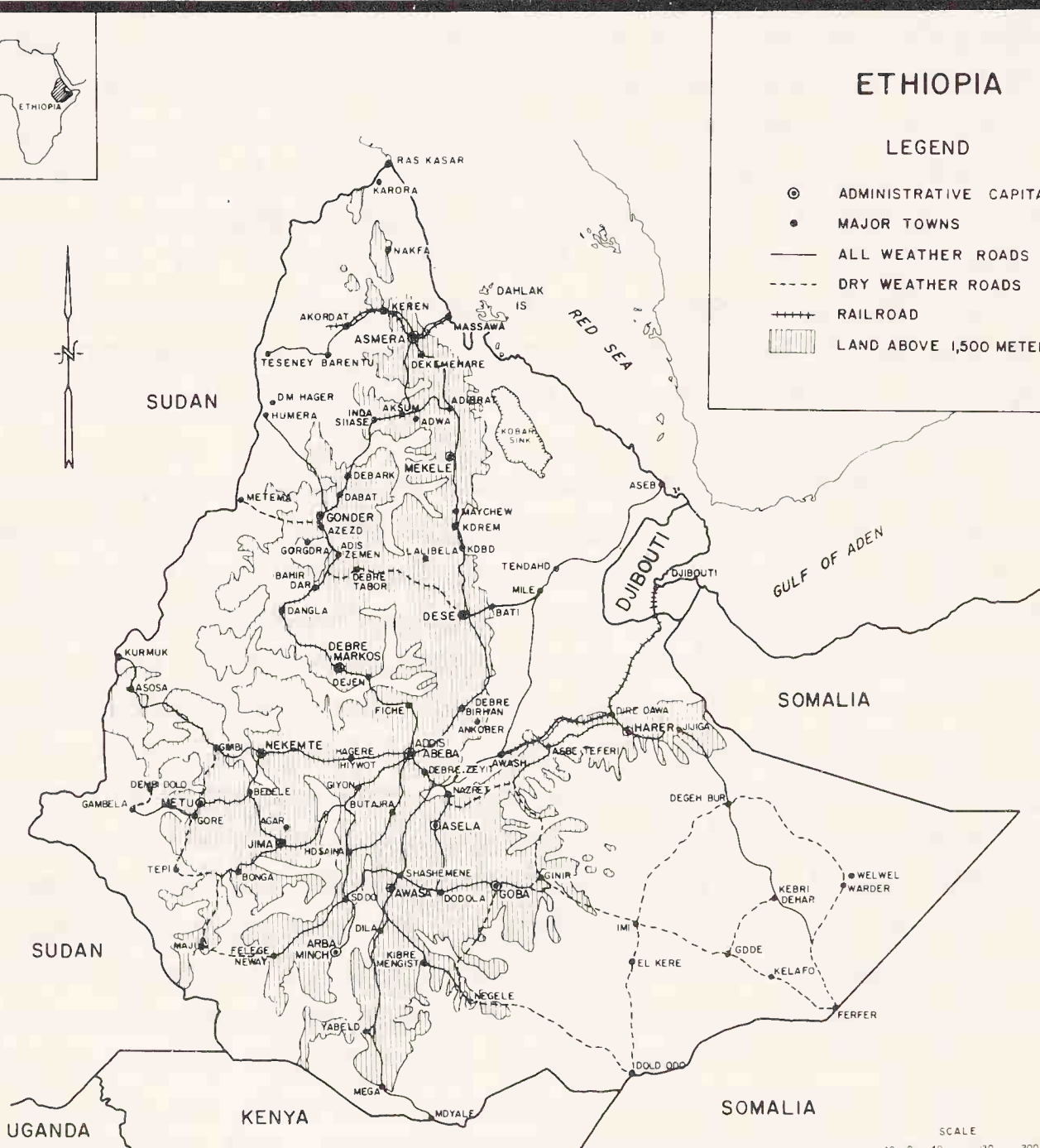
We would like to thank Larry Bowman, the Westview Africa Series editor, and Assefa Mehretu for their comments on most of the original draft of the manuscript. Our thanks also go to Joseph Boyette, dean of the Graduate School, and Ennis Chestang, coordinator of international studies, both at East Carolina University, for providing facilities and administrative assistance for the completion of this project. William Bloodworth, Gay Wilentz, and Gary Markert provided valuable editorial comments on parts of the manuscript. However, the authors take full responsibility for what appears in the book. Thanks are also due to Shirley Evans, who typed parts of the manuscript, and to Katrina Flint and Greg Weeks, who drafted the maps and charts. We are also grateful to many Ethiopian friends who provided us with invaluable material for the research of the book. Mulatu Wubneh expresses a special thanks to Wienshet for her patience and for taking care of Kinde and Helmae, who will shortly discover why their father has been so busy lately.

Mulatu Wubneh
Yohannis Abate

ETHIOPIA

LEGEND

- ⊙ ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITALS
- MAJOR TOWNS
- ALL WEATHER ROADS
- - - DRY WEATHER ROADS
- + + + RAILROAD
- ▨ LAND ABOVE 1,500 METERS



1

Geographical and Historical Setting

Ethiopia has long been regarded as a land of legend and thus has held special fascination for people in many countries, a fascination stemming from images purveyed by writers and travelers.¹ These images relate to the legends associated with the claim by Ethiopian monarchs to be descendants of the Lion of Judah; the legends of Prester John, the Christian king reigning somewhere south of the lands of Islam; the survival of Ethiopia's Orthodox Christian religion; the tenacity of its cultural, linguistic, and religious institutions; and the survival of its independence in the midst of an Africa under European domination.

Some of these legends are incorporated in the *Kibre Negest* (Glory of Kings), the literary script that describes the founding of the Ethiopian nation, the glory of its monarchs, and their relation to King David of Israel. The story refers to the union of Sheba and Solomon and the birth of their son, Menelik I, the king of Ethiopia. The Solomonic legend has been used as a major source of legitimacy for ascendancy to the throne. The *Kibre Negest* also gives an account of the origin of Ethiopian Christianity and tells how Ethiopia took possession of the Ark of Covenant. The *Kibre Negest* has been referred to as a "national epic"² because it defines the secular and religious foundation of Ethiopian nationhood.

The legends of Prester John were part of the mythology of European kings who sought a strong ally to help them expand their domination outward. The earliest accounts of Prester John, written in the twelfth century, described him as a powerful ruler reigning over seventy-two kings and three Indias.³ European fascination with Ethiopia was also compelled by the mythical appeal of Christian Ethiopia, a country with highly developed social and cultural institutions preserved for centuries and reminiscent of the Europe of the Middle Ages. Many of the early European travelers—for instance, Francisco Alvarez, the Portuguese priest

who traveled to Ethiopia in the 1520s—described Ethiopia as a strange land ruled by kings and nobles with shifting royal capitals, a land in which the Christian religion was interspersed with peculiar customs and beliefs and which had a society with ancient social and cultural institutions preserved for centuries. In the centuries that followed, not only did other travelers come to Ethiopia and take back their accounts of this strange land, but there was also a regular flow of Ethiopian pilgrims to the Holy Land. Many Ethiopian monks traveled to Europe through the Holy Land, and wherever they met fellow Christians they transmitted vivid accounts of their church, the Christian kingdom, and the power of their rulers.

European fascination with the culture and society of Ethiopia has continued up to the twentieth century, and a number of missions from European powers arrived in Ethiopian courts seeking friendship and permission to expand trade and missionary activities. During the colonial scramble for Africa, Ethiopia successfully warding off colonization attempts by European powers. In 1896, when Ethiopia scored a decisive victory over the invading Italians at the battle of Adwa, news of the victory was received with shock by many European powers, who had believed that Ethiopia did not stand a chance against a “civilized European power.” Later, in 1935, when Ethiopia became the victim of Italian aggression, there were demonstrations of outrage against the Italians in Europe, the West Indies, and the United States, particularly among the black community for whom Ethiopia was a source of inspiration and a symbol of political independence and cultural continuity of Africa. Young African nationalists, including Kwame Nkrumah, Leopold Senghor, and Jomo Kenyatta, were all inspired to organize support for Ethiopia’s cause.⁴ Even in the postcolonial era Ethiopia has retained a prominent place in African affairs: Addis Ababa, its capital city, is the location for the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Despite the fascination that Ethiopia has held, knowledge about the realities of its political, social, and economic affairs has been limited and often fragmentary.⁵ Most studies, based on travelers’ accounts, were characterized by excessively romantic descriptions. In the twentieth century, when Ethiopia still maintained its fascination, historians who were intrigued by Ethiopia’s ability to preserve its independence throughout the era of colonization raised several questions. What were the unique characteristics of Ethiopia that enabled it alone among traditional African societies to retain its sovereignty? Why did Ethiopia survive as a free nation during the scramble for African colonies?

Various explanations have been offered: the impregnability of Ethiopia’s highlands, the internal characteristics of the Ethiopian society,

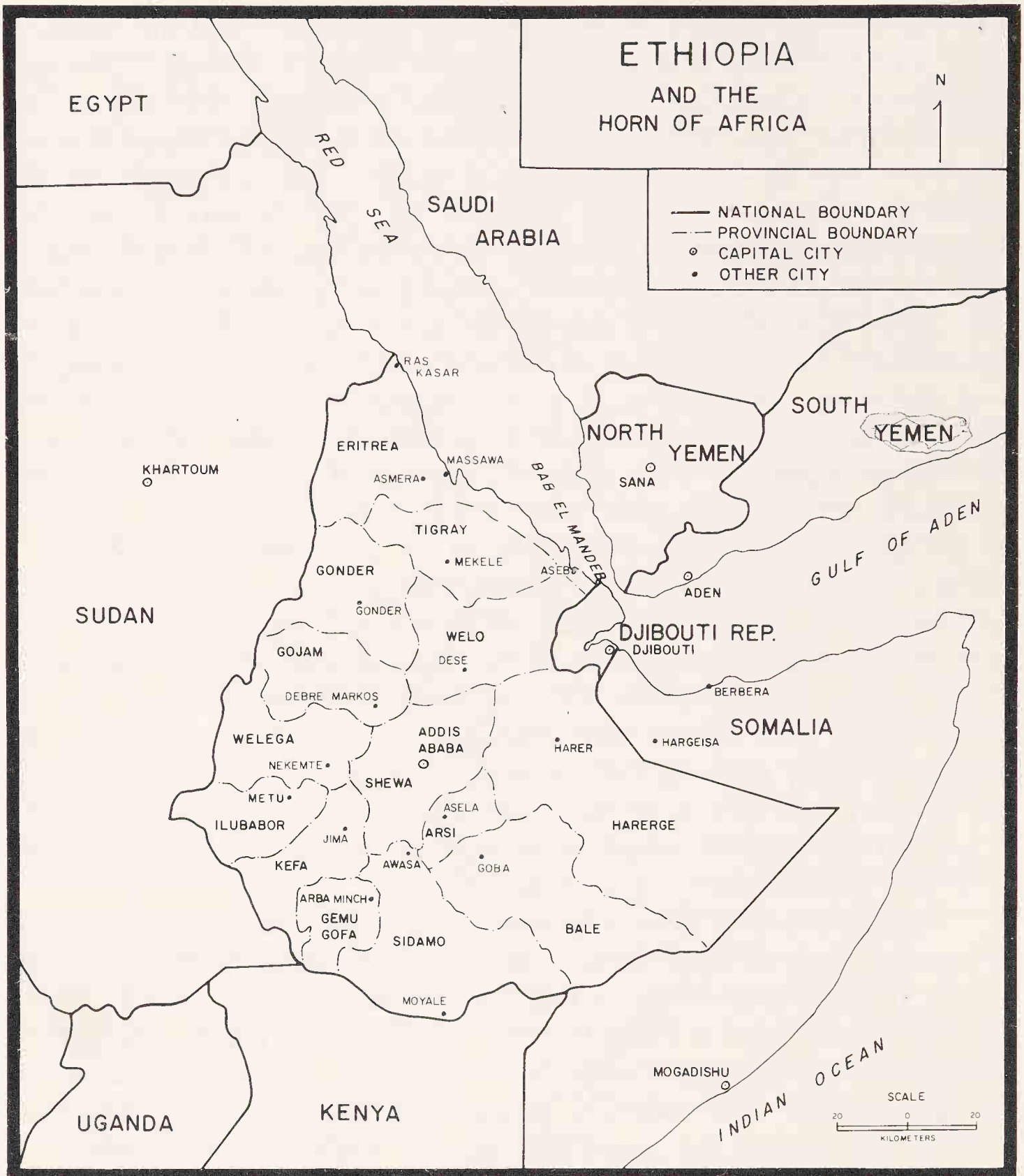
the “national spirit based on the legendary foundation and the common faith,” and the period of isolation that characterized its history.⁶ Although geographical factors (for instance, Ethiopia’s strategic position in the Horn of Africa) were certainly important in influencing Ethiopia’s history, they were by no means determining factors. The institution of the monarchy, with its legendary roots in the Old Testament, and the common faith, traditions, and culture of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church have contributed to the formation of a national and political consciousness. But, again, it is difficult to accept this factor as “a full and sufficient explanation” for the survival of Ethiopia’s independence. According to Sven Rubenson, “the relevant factors belonged to three categories: firstly, the diplomatic, political, and military conditions on the European (and the Turkish-Egyptian) side; secondly, the actual political and military conditions on the Ethiopian side; thirdly, the serious and repeated miscalculations of Ethiopia’s strength by its ‘protectors’ and invaders.”⁷ Rubenson maintains that foreign powers failed to subdue Ethiopia because they seemed to underestimate the resilience and diplomatic awareness of its emperors and the capacity of the regional powers (kings and *rases*, or princes) to regroup under a strong leader in times of crisis.⁸ This is not to imply that rivalry and disunity did not characterize part of Ethiopia’s history but only that foreign powers were rarely able to exploit this disunity and rivalry to their own advantage. The diplomatic skills as well as the military might of Europeans and the Turkish-Egyptians were not sufficient to subdue Ethiopia.

Thus, the key to Ethiopia’s survival seems to be a combination of its unique historical experience, not shared by many of its neighbors, and its strategic location straddling the African and Arab worlds. These same factors continue to influence the process of change and development in Ethiopia. In the remainder of this chapter, we present an analysis of the geographical and historical factors that are influencing Ethiopia’s development during the transition from an imperial-feudal system of government to state socialism.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

Ethiopia is a country “characterized by basic development paradox.”⁹ It has great agricultural potential, a fairly wide and diverse endowment of natural resources, varied climatic and topographic regions, a large population, and a strategic location in the Horn of Africa (see Map 1.1). But it is also one of the least developed countries in the world.

Ethiopia has an area of 1,221,480 sq. km. (472,00 sq. mi.), almost three times the size of Texas or one-twentieth that of the United States. The capital city, Addis Ababas, is within reach of the southern edge of



MAP 1.1

the Arabian Peninsula (1,000 km.; or 625 mi.) and in some proximity to the Gulf area (3,000 km.; 1,870 mi.). The Ethiopian landscape is dominated by a massive highland complex of mountains and dissected plateaus. The Great Rift Valley running in a northeast-southwest direction, divides the highland complex in two. A series of lowlands, semidesert plains, and steppes characterize the northern, western, and eastern peripheries of the country. Tropical montane rainforest and savannah grasslands are found in the southwest and central parts of the country. In altitude the land ranges from the highest peak, Ras Dejen (Ras



Tis Abay (Tisisat) Falls, flowing south of Lake Tana, the source of the Blue Nile. (United Nations)



Kurt Jansson, UN assistant secretary general for emergency relief operations in Ethiopia, visiting a relief camp for famine victims in Mekele in 1984. (United Nations Photo 164644/John Isaac)

Dashen), 4,500 m. (14,700 ft.) above sea level down to the Kobar Sink depression, 120 m. (400 ft.) below sea level. The 960-km. (600-mi.) coastline along the Red Sea puts Ethiopia in a strategic position along one of the busiest oil shipping lanes in the world. The diversity in terrain and physiographic conditions has created variations in climate, soils, natural vegetation, and settlement patterns. The agricultural potential of the country is also influenced by climatic and physiographic conditions—in particular, the length of growing seasons, the temperature, and the amount of moisture retained in the ground.

Based on elevations, three major ecological zones may be identified: a cool zone (*dega*), found between 2,300 and 3,300 m. (7,500–10,800 ft.), where annual temperatures range from 10°C (50°F) to near freezing; a temperate zone (*weina dega*) at elevations of 1,500 to 2,300 m. (4,900–7,500 ft.), with annual temperatures from 15°C (59°F) to 20°C (68°F); and a hot zone (*kolla*) between 500 to 1,500 m. (1,600–4,900 ft.), with both tropical and arid conditions and temperatures of about 30°C (86°F). Two other ecological zones are often identified: alpine (*kur*), over 3,000 m. (9,800 ft.) in elevation with temperatures below 10°C (50°F); and semidesert (*bereha*), below 500 m. (1,600 ft.) in elevation and with temperatures exceeding 30°C–40°C (86°F–104°F).¹⁰ These are zones that suffer from either frost (in *kur* areas) or severe water shortage (in *bereha* areas) and, therefore, are not suited to agricultural development. Local farmers often use the names of ecological zones to describe the climatic, vegetation, and agricultural conditions within their areas.¹¹

The rainy season runs from June to September, often preceded by intermittent showers. Precipitation is subject to marked fluctuation in time and space. The southwestern part of the country (most of Kefa, Welega, and Ilubabor administrative regions) receives the most rainfall, an annual average of about 1,400 mm. (56 in.). Toward the northeast, precipitation declines to an annual average of about 50 mm. (2 in.) in the Aseb area. In general, the highlands experience adequate rainfall and moderate to cooler temperatures, whereas the lowland areas in the northwestern, eastern, and southern peripheries of the country are semiarid.

Unreliability of rainfall has been a major factor in the periodic droughts in Ethiopia, the most recent being the 1984 drought that resulted in the death of over 300,000 people and put about 8 million people on the brink of starvation.¹² Desertification—a process of ecological degradation resulting from natural forces (deterioration of the environment) and uncontrolled human action (poor agricultural practices)—has been blamed for deforestation, permanent loss of cultivable and pastoral lands, particularly in the northern part of the country, and various incidences of famine in Ethiopian history.

Another major impact of the diversity of the ecological zones is their effect on the distribution of settlement patterns. A majority of Ethiopia's population is concentrated in the highland plateau, mostly in the *dega* and *weina dega* zones. Population density ranges from as high as 125–150 persons per sq. km. (.4 sq. mi.) in southern Shewa to less than 20 persons per sq. km. (.4 sq. mi.) in the lowland areas below the 500-m. (1,600-ft.) contour line. These lowlands are mostly malarial areas with meager rainfall. The highland population, largely sedentary, is engaged in subsistence cultivation and livestock raising. The population in the lowland peripheries (*kolla* zone) is mostly nomadic, engaged in livestock raising with very little farming. Traditionally, the various ethnic groups from the highland and lowland areas of Ethiopia exchanged agricultural products at the centers along the boundaries of these zones. Towns—such as Bati, Aliu Amba, Harer, and Basso—were often located on the margins of the zones and played significant roles as exchange centers.

Eighty percent of the population of Ethiopia are farmers, generating 48 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and 90 percent of exports in 1982/83. Until the 1974 revolution, land tenure varied greatly; tenancy dominated in the south, whereas the ancient *rist* system based on kinship and communal village tenure was common in the north. (A discussion of land tenure may be found in Chapter 4.) The prominent landowners included the nobility, members of the royal family, and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which at one time is believed to have owned one-third of the land. It has been estimated that only about 14 percent of the potential arable land is under cultivation while more than 54 percent is dry pasture. Forest, which covered about 30 percent of the country in 1900, has now dwindled to less than 3 percent.¹³

Ethiopia has the largest livestock population in Africa—about 77 million in 1984 (in addition to 52 million chickens). There were 27 million cattle, 23 million sheep, 19 million goats, and 8 million other livestock. Lack of effective disease control, dearth of better management techniques, and the high concentration of animals in the highland areas (66 percent were in the *dega* and *weina dega* zones), together with the fact that cattle are often kept as a traditional status symbol, have reduced the economic potential of Ethiopian livestock. It has been estimated that the highland area supports 8.5 million more livestock than it actually should.

Reliable estimates of Ethiopia's mineral resources do not exist, although such minerals as gold, platinum, salt, limestone, and clay are mined in small quantities. Large reserves of potash are located in the Danakil Depression. In 1981/82, mining accounted for less than 0.2 percent of the GDP. Small quantities of iron ore, copper, manganese,



Cattle at a major local market, 1975. (World Bank/Ray Witlin)



Kereyu shepherds and their herd of sheep and goats crossing a major irrigation canal on the Metehara Sugar Estate in the Rift Valley, 1970. (United Nations/Nagata)

nickel, and asbestos have been discovered, and oil and natural gas explorations continue in Ogaden and the Dahlk Islands, but no oil has been found.¹⁴ A major handicap to the exploitation of mineral resources has been the lack of detailed exploration for these resources.

Ethiopia also has a vast potential for producing hydroelectric and geothermal power. In 1982, of the 632.4 million kilowatt hours of power produced, 92 percent was from hydroelectric sources. The existing interconnected hydro power systems at the Awash I (Koka), II, III, and Fincha plants have a combined capacity of 330 million kilowatts. In terms of per capita power consumption, however, Ethiopia is among the lowest in the world. Rural electrification has been given top priority under the ten-year perspective plan, which aims at providing electricity to an additional ninety-five towns by 1994.

One consequence of the rugged terrain is a poor transportation system, a major obstacle to development in Ethiopia, limiting the nation's capacity to provide services and exploit natural resources. In 1982/83 Ethiopia had 14,500 km. (9,000 mi.) of all-weather roads; two rail connections—a 781-km. (485-mi.) rail connecting Addis Ababa and Djibouti and a 306-km. (190-mi.) narrow-gauge rail connecting Akordat and Massawa; and an airline system that serviced thirty domestic airports and twenty-two countries. Aseb and Massawa (Mitsiwa) constitute the two major ports, with Djibouti serving as an additional international trade link. A relatively small amount of trade with the Sudan takes place in Gambela along the Baro, the only navigable river in Ethiopia. But the available transport system, particularly roads, which carry about 90 percent of freight and 95 percent of all passengers, is very small for so large an area. According to one estimate, only about 12 percent of the population has ready access to roads.

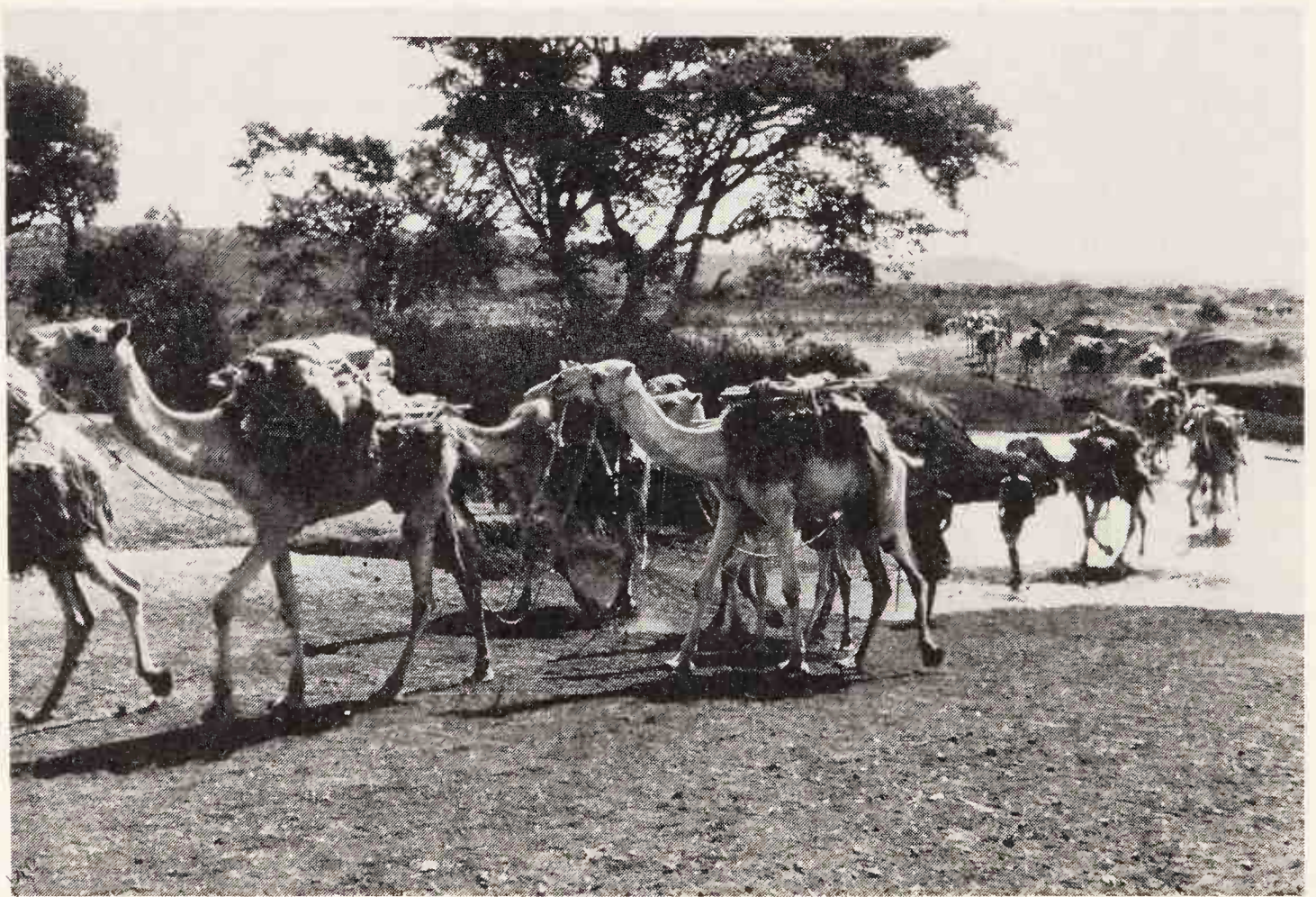
ORIGINS OF THE ETHIOPIAN STATE

Ethiopia traces its origins to the ancient kingdom of Aksum, which emerged in the sixth century B.C. in the highland plateau of Tigray.¹⁵ At its zenith, in the third century A.D. the empire founded by the Aksumite kings of Ethiopia extended from Nubia (northern Sudan) to Lake Tana in Gojam.¹⁶ In the fourth century A.D. Christianity was introduced into Ethiopia. The new religion took root and influenced the life and politics of the Aksumites. Thus, two important institutions that until recently guided Ethiopia's history—the monarchy and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church—have their beginnings in this period.

With the rise of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century and its spread northward into Egypt and along the Red Sea coast, the Christian empire became completely isolated and gradually



Community group clearing an area for road construction near Asbe Teferi in 1983. (United Nations Photo 152,467/John Isaac)



Camels still served as a major means of transportation in 1982 in the lowland areas of Ethiopia. (United Nations Photo 152,696/L. Gubb)



lost its influence as a major political power. The descendants of the Aksumites expanded southward into the interior of the Ethiopian plateau; Muslims controlled the Red Sea coast and the lowlands, and Ethiopia remained isolated from the rest of the world. The Zagwey dynasty (1137–1270) finally took control of the empire and ruled the Christian state. The Zagwey dynasty (also known as the “Dynasty of Agew”) assumed power when the capital of the monarch moved from Aksum to Kubar, a stronghold of the Agew, located in the upper basin of the Tekeze River.¹⁷ In 1270 the Solomonic dynasty regained the power it had lost in 1137; its rise marked Ethiopia’s emergence from obscurity.

For almost three centuries after the Solomonic dynasty assumed power, Ethiopia engaged in a protracted, savage conflict with its Muslim neighbors. Muslim aggression and encirclement has been a major problem facing Ethiopia that has persisted to the present time. Particularly with the Ottoman conquest of Egypt and Arabia in the sixteenth century, political patterns in the Red Sea area became seriously altered against Ethiopian interests.¹⁸ The country became a Christian island in a Muslim sea, and its power was continually tested. Although Ethiopia managed to repel Muslim encroachments on its territory, at times it suffered invasion, the most destructive of which was led by Ahmed Ibn al Ghazi (1506–1543), who was also known as Gagn (“the left-handed,” in Amharic). Gagn’s army, largely made up of Afar and Somali forces, was able to penetrate much of the highland Christian territory until it was repelled by Gelawdewos (who reigned from 1540 to 1559) with the assistance of the Portuguese. The Portuguese government sent 400 soldiers to help Gelawdewos resist Gagn’s invasion.

Later, Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries began to arrive in Ethiopia to establish close ties between the two countries. The missionaries, who wished Ethiopia to accept Roman Catholicism, tried to induce the Ethiopian Orthodox Church to reject its Monophysite beliefs and to accept the leadership of Rome. They succeeded in converting at least two of Ethiopia’s emperors. The religious controversy between adherents of the Monophysite belief and supporters of Roman Catholicism led to great bloodshed that continued for many years. Finally, Susenyos (1607–1632), one of the Catholic emperors, abdicated in favor of his son, Fasiledes (1632–1667), to spare the country any further bloodshed. The empire was subsequently restored when Fasiledes established a permanent capital at Gonder and expelled all Jesuits and Roman Catholic missionaries from the country. This period of religious controversy left a strong hostility to foreign Christians and a general xenophobia that continued into the twentieth century.¹⁹

The establishment of a permanent capital produced a flowering of architecture and art. But the Gonderine dynasty (ca 1632–1855) began

to lose power, particularly after the death of Iyasu I (1682–1706). Iyasu was determined to unify the kingdom and to reform the foundations of the Ethiopian polity—the church, the administration, and the army. He led several military expeditions into Shewa and southwest into Sidama territory to reestablish Ethiopian authority. His vain efforts did not prevent the empire from eventual disintegration but only delayed it. Between 1706 and 1769, seven kings of kings ruled Ethiopia.²⁰ Part of this period was characterized by political intrigue and assassinations; theological controversy and regional confrontation became common; and territorial control was limited only to the highland areas of Gonder, Tigray, Gojam, Shewa, and Welo.²¹ The Red Sea coast and the eastern regions of Harerge, Awsa, and Danakil territory were Muslim principalities.

It was during this time that the Oromo, one of the major ethnic groups, began to play an important role in the political affairs of the empire. The Oromo (referred to as the Galla by most writers) began their northward migration into the central, north, and eastern part of Ethiopia sometime in the early decades of the sixteenth century. They were mostly pastoralists, and their migration was in search of land for grazing their cattle and for settlement. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Oromo had penetrated as far north as Tigray, east into Danakil territory and the highlands of Harer, and west into Damot and the Gibe basin. Many of the Oromo were gradually integrated into the army and eventually assimilated into the Ethiopian polity.²² After the death of Iyasu II (1730–1755), imperial power continued to decline rapidly. During the “Age of the Princes” (1769–1855), the kingdom barely existed, as the various principalities were ruled by autonomous princes (*rases*).

THE MAKING OF MODERN ETHIOPIA

Emperors Tewodros and Yohannes

The Age of the Princes came to an end with the rise of Tewodros (1855–1868), who, faced constantly with rebellions, managed to subdue the church and the provincial nobility and emerged as the ruler of Ethiopia. Tewodros had a vision of reviving the imperial power, introducing modernizing elements, and reunifying Ethiopia. He restructured the administrative and financial system, raised a regular army, and began to establish contact with foreign powers. His campaign for reform faced stiff opposition from the clergy and the nobility, who resented their loss of power and influence. Tewodros sought, without success, to establish

alliances with European powers.²³ He died at Maqdala in 1868, far short of achieving his goals to unify and modernize Ethiopia.

Emperor Yohannes IV (1872–1889), who succeeded Tewodros, was able to consolidate his power by tolerating provincial dynasties so long as they recognized him as emperor. He entered into an alliance with Menelik of Shewa, who at that time constituted a formidable contender for regional power. Menelik was given considerable autonomy over the southern part of the empire in exchange for his recognition of Yohannes's authority.²⁴ Yohannes's empire was under constant attack from the Egyptians and the Turks, who made several attempts to control the coastal area, and from the Mahdists of the Sudan, who harassed the western part. Yohannes managed to repel these attacks but with the opening of the Suez Canal, he faced new powers whose political and strategic threats were greater than those of the Turks or the Egyptians. In 1869, an Italian company had purchased an area of the port of Aseb for trading purposes. In 1882, the Italian government took over the entire port and declared the area its protectorate. Italy occupied Massawa in 1885 and began to encroach into the interior despite Yohannes's denial of the right of the Italians to occupy the coastal area. After a long and complicated conflict with Yohannes and his general, Ras Alula, the Italians were able to occupy most of Eritrea. Yohannes was not able to give his full attention to the Italian threat because of the Mahdist invasion. In January 1887, the Mahdists ravaged the Gonder area. Yohannes moved his force to Gonder to repel them and was killed in the resulting battle at Metema in March 1889.

Menelik II

Menelik II became emperor of Ethiopia in 1889 and reigned until 1913. By 1900, through diplomatic maneuver and military conquest, Menelik had succeeded in establishing control over much of present-day Ethiopia. He and his generals made a number of expeditions to the south and southeast to subjugate Somali, Kefa, Gurage, Welamo, Kembata, Borena, and Harerge areas. For the most part, Menelik and his generals used force to expand his empire, although there were cases in which local rulers were given the opportunity to submit to Menelik peacefully. For instance, Aba Jifar of Jima kept Menelik's army from marching over his territory by readily submitting and agreeing to pay an annual tribute and to actively assist the emperor in his efforts to control Kefa. In return, Aba Jifar was given local autonomy. Welega and Arsi also submitted peacefully, realizing the futility of facing Menelik's superior army. Welamo, on the other hand, was devastated, and its ruler, King Tona, taken captive because of Welamo's refusal to submit. The conquered territories were fully controlled, as Menelik installed his trusted com-

manders as governors. Most of the army that participated in the conquest of the south and east was settled in newly established garrison towns. A major redistribution of land and allotment of *gebbars* (serfs) was carried out to help Menelik's army establish permanent settlements.²⁵

Menelik's expansion policy had begun even while he was king of Shewa. His motives seemed to be both economic and strategic. Menelik needed access to the rich areas of the south and east—known for their coffee, ivory, gold, and civette gum—to finance his modernization efforts and to buy modern European weapons. Menelik was also gravely concerned about the security of his empire. With the British, French, and Italians surrounding him, he felt that he should secure a buffer zone between the highland areas and the territory claimed by the Europeans. He also wanted a secure access to the sea, for trade, through Zeila, Aseb, and Obock.²⁶ In 1897, following Italy's defeat at Adwa, Menelik concluded boundary agreements with Great Britain, France, and Italy. By 1904, Menelik had expanded Ethiopia's territorial limits to the south and southwest much as they are at present.

Menelik embarked on a modest modernization program in Ethiopia. In 1887, as king of Shewa, he founded Addis Ababa as his capital city, the first permanent capital since Gonder in 1632. This move was a significant departure from the traditional shifting capitals of Ethiopian monarchs (spurred by the rise of politico-military powers in different parts of the country), and it also marked the beginning of a new era in the modernization of Ethiopia. Other new developments included the opening of schools and hospitals, the establishment of postal and banking systems, the founding of a newspaper and the establishment of a printing press, the construction of all-weather roads, and the introduction of a ministerial system. In 1896, Menelik signed a contract with a French company for the construction of the Addis Ababa–Djibouti railway line.²⁷

One of Menelik's first important acts was to sign the Treaty of Wuchale with Italy in May 1889. The Italians later claimed that this treaty gave them protectorate rights over Ethiopia.²⁸ The Italian version of Article 17 of the treaty stated that Menelik must consult with the Italian government for any negotiations with foreign powers; the Amharic version, however, stated that the emperor, at his own option, might consult with the Italian government in dealings with foreign powers. Italy began to campaign for European recognition of the treaty according to Italy's interpretation. Many European countries sided with Italy, but Turkey, Russia, and France refused to acknowledge the *de jure* existence of the Italian protectorate over Ethiopia. Menelik remained steadfast in his interpretation and subsequently renounced the treaty. All efforts to negotiate failed and Ethiopia and Italy began to prepare for war. By 1895, the Italians had occupied much of Eritrea and were pushing

southwards toward Tigray. In March 1896 Menelik faced the Italians and defeated them in a decisive battle at Adwa, and Ethiopia was duly accorded European recognition as an independent state.

Although Menelik was victorious, he did not throw the Italians out of Eritrea, because his army was running short of supplies and suffering from battle fatigue. He did not want to risk the hard-won victory by pursuing the Italians, who had retreated to well-fortified positions.²⁹ Many Eritreans were bitter that they had been abandoned to the Italians. Eritrean separatists used Menelik's failure to pursue his victory as grounds for Ethiopia's forfeiture of its claim over Eritrea. This event serves as one of the rationales for Eritrea's independence.³⁰

Nonetheless, the Adwa victory has a special significance in Ethiopian history. First, it demonstrated to European powers that Ethiopia was a power to contend with, not a "barbarous African nation" up for grabs in their plan to partition Africa. The victory forced European powers to recognize Ethiopia's independence and hence to settle their territorial claims with Emperor Menelik by signing boundary treaties. Second, it shattered the notion that Ethiopia had neither the means nor the know-how to stand against a "civilized European power." Such underestimation of Ethiopia's national potential had always been a major factor in the failure of Ethiopia's enemies to subdue it—as the Italians failed at Adwa and as the Egyptians under Khedive Ismail had failed at Gura in 1876. Third, it reaffirmed, as Rubenson puts it, "the survival of an old nation and the creation of a new one."³¹

Menelik suffered a stroke in 1906 that left him paralyzed. The following year he proclaimed the creation of the Council of Ministers to assist him in running the affairs of the government. Having no son of his own, he designated his twelve-year-old grandson, Lij Iyasu, as his successor and heir to the throne in 1908. Menelik died in 1913, and when Ras Michael of Welo, Iyasu's father, requested the immediate accession of his son to the throne, the council members and the archbishop (Abune Mattewos) refused to crown Iyasu before 1916, when he would be twenty years old, just old enough to assume power.³² Rivalry developed between the Welo and Shewa nobilities. The Shewa nobility were concerned about Iyasu's inclination toward Islam and in 1916 accused him of having converted to Islam and blocked his accession. Instead, Zewditu, Menelik's daughter, was crowned empress. Ras Teferi was named regent and heir to the throne.³³

The Regency Under Empress Zewditu

Empress Zewditu's reign (1916–1930) was characterized by rivalry, largely resulting from Ras Teferi's maneuvers to control power. The empress was surrounded by a traditionalist group, whereas Ras Teferi

avored the continuation of modernization efforts initiated by Menelik. He promoted the development of schools, ministries, and the establishment of foreign contacts. A weekly newspaper called *Birhanena Selam* (Light and Peace) was published, and a printing press of the same name was set up. In 1923, Ras Teferi successfully sought the admission of Ethiopia to a membership in the League of Nations.³⁴ Teferi began to consolidate his power particularly after the death of Fitawrari Habte Giyorgis in 1926. Habte Giyorgis, who was the minister for war, was considered a potential stumbling block on Ras Teferi's path to the throne. In 1930, Teferi removed the last obstacle when he went to war against Ras Gugsa Wolie, Empress Zewditu's husband, over Gugsa's anti-Teferi campaign. Gugsa accused Teferi of conversion to Catholicism and called on the nobility to rise against him. At the battle of Anchim, Gugsa's army was wiped out and Gugsa himself was killed. A few days later Empress Zewditu died of complications brought on by diabetes, from which she had been suffering for a long time. Teferi, who had been regent for fourteen years, was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie on November 2, 1930.

Summary

The period 1855 to the ascent of Haile Selassie in 1930 marked the beginning of the modern empire. It was characterized by four major developments that were crucial in shaping Ethiopia's history into the twentieth century. First, the imperial institution was revived after a period of decline, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church was restored after decades of strife following both Muslim assault and Roman Catholic influence, and the power of the nobility was weakened. Imperial power, the church, and the nobility, each claiming its own independent political base, began to form a partnership in Ethiopian politics. Relationships among the three were delicately balanced through a mutual protection of each others' interests: Thus, the emperor enjoyed supreme power in return for his adherence to the Orthodox Church and for his recognition of the interests of both the church and the provincial nobility. The church, in return, transmitted legitimacy of the emperor by anointment, and the nobility expressed their allegiance and support to the emperor.

Second, during this period Ethiopia expanded well beyond its original northern territory. Particularly during the reign of Menelik II, Ethiopia's territory had expanded approximately to its present boundary. With the expansion of the empire, large populations—including additional Oromo, the Sidama, Welamo, Gurage, Ogaden Somali, to mention only a few—were incorporated into the empire. Some of Ethiopia's ethnic and regional problems in the 1980s may be traced to this era, when

many of these ethnic groups began to resent their forced integration into the Amhara-Tigray-dominated central government.

Third, Ethiopia opened to modernizing influences as contact was resumed with the outside world after years of isolation. Ethiopian emperors accepted European missions and also entered into negotiations to protect the territorial integrity of the empire. In internal affairs, the emperors continued reforming the administrative system, introducing the ministerial form of government, establishing a regular army, and strengthening imperial power.

Fourth, the beginning of the modern empire brought with it new challenges for Ethiopia's emperors. The second half of the nineteenth century was characterized by the European "scramble for Africa." In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened, which enhanced the strategic and economic significance of the Horn of Africa. In July 1906, Great Britain, France, and Italy completed the Tripartite Agreement to partition Ethiopia into spheres of influence. Britain's sphere lay in the western part around the headwaters of the Blue Nile; Italy's share included an arc of territories connecting Eritrea and Italian Somaliland and passing west of Addis Ababa; and France's sphere extended from Djibouti to the interior along the territory traversed by the railroad.³⁵ The interests of the colonial powers posed a threat to Ethiopian sovereignty.

Problems associated with the foreign threat and the integration of new territories into the empire prevailed during the reigns of Tewodros, Yohannes, and Menelik and continued into Haile Selassie's time. Emperor Haile Selassie had to wage a constant struggle to consolidate his power, resist foreign interference, and maintain the territorial integrity of the country.

HAILE SELASSIE'S ERA



Haile Selassie (1930–1974) continued to push reforms aimed at centralizing the government and modernizing Ethiopia. Menelik might have pioneered the establishment of a modern administrative mechanism, but permanent structures did not begin to emerge until Haile Selassie assumed power. Among Haile Selassie's early achievements were the expansion of a professional army, including a police force; the strengthening of the ministerial system and the bureaucracy; the expansion of a modern school system; the strengthening of foreign alliances; and the proclamation of the first constitution (1931).

As regent, Haile Selassie had acquired a reputation for being an enlightened reformer. So, on accession to the throne, as one of his modernizing initiatives, he granted the first constitution. The 1931 constitution was significant not for its liberal traditions but rather for

its symbolic role in providing a formal definition of the relationships between the emperor and the nobility and between the emperor and the administration of the government. It called for the establishment of a chamber of deputies, whose members were chosen by the nobility and the local chiefs, and of a senate, composed of loyal supporters appointed by the emperor. The executive office under the new constitution included a crown council presided over by the emperor and a council of ministers. (According to Article 49, ministers were to serve as *de facto* council on important matters when asked by the emperor, although the term "council" was not used.)

The emperor enjoyed supreme authority under the constitution, which formalized his position vis-à-vis the church and the traditional nobility. But to further his policy of centralization and modernization, he had to cultivate the support of both these groups. The church, as the custodian of Ethiopian Christian tradition and as one of the prominent landowners, constituted a formidable power. The emperor was fully aware of the traditional powers of the church; it had previously brought down emperors who were inimical to its interests or who professed religions other than Orthodox Christianity. He successfully curbed its power by introducing administrative reforms that limited the church's authority to tax church lands; he abolished the temporal jurisdiction of the church courts and placed the operation of the church under government supervision. The church, headed by the archbishop (*abun*), retained an independent spiritual identity and became the established church of the empire.³⁶

The other major group that Haile Selassie had to deal with was the nobility. This was an assorted group of political leaders and bureaucrats made up of close relatives of the emperor, high dignitaries of the imperial court, individuals with senior positions in the government, either through personal status or palace connections, provincial elites, and high-ranking military officers.³⁷ The emperor was able to curb the power of the nobility by introducing legislation that defined the powers and responsibilities of the various ministries and that effectively limited the nobility's exercise of independent authority. The various legislations strengthened the central power and weakened the hold of the nobility in the provinces, where new appointees loyal to the emperor replaced many of the traditional provincial rulers.

The Italian invasion in 1935 interrupted Haile Selassie's rule; the following year he was driven into exile by the Fascist army. The Italian occupation, although brief, had some major impacts on urbanization, road building, commerce, and trade. But the occupation also claimed the lives of thousands of Ethiopians, including much of its small educated class. A strong resistance movement organized by Ethiopian patriots

continued as Italian atrocities strengthened opposition to the occupation.³⁸ Ethiopia remained occupied until 1941, when Haile Selassie returned following Italy's defeat by combined Ethiopian and British forces.

Upon his return, the emperor continued to consolidate his power and further centralized his government.³⁹ By establishing a modern army under his command, he further curtailed the power of the nobility and their potential to raise regional armies. He revised the administrative divisions and appointed governors and officials to run the provincial administrations. In 1943, he issued Order No. 1 of 1943 (Definition of Powers Order) that formally established the Council of Ministers and further defined areas of responsibility of the various ministries. His administrative reforms included the establishment of a new fiscal system, the reorganization of the provincial administration, and the reforming of the court system. The financial reform included the creation of a basic standardized accounting and tax collecting system. Taxes were to be paid in cash in place of the traditional payment of tribute in kind or services due the emperor. The Ministry of Interior was made responsible for provincial administration and for internal security.

One of the early postwar reform programs of the emperor was the systematization of the judicial system by establishing a hierarchy of courts—the Supreme Imperial Court, the High Court, the provincial courts, and the regional and communal courts—and defining the jurisdiction and competence of each. Prior to this, the administration of justice had not been formally defined. In 1942 the emperor introduced a new land-tax system based on acreage and fertility rather than on value of production. A *gasha* (40 ha.) of land was to be taxed 15 birr (\$6), 10 birr (\$4) and 5 birr (\$2) for land classified as fertile, semifertile, and poor, respectively. The proclamation also called for taxes to be levied by collectors appointed by the Ministry of Finance; this was different from the practices of the prewar period, when taxes were collected by provincial governors and their assistants. Thus, by the 1950s, many administrative, financial, and judicial reforms were complete. For the first time in Ethiopian history, taxes were collected by salaried civil servants and forwarded to the state treasury, provinces were run by state-employed administrators, and judges were appointed to conduct the legal affairs of the government through a new national court system.

In 1955, on the Silver Jubilee of his coronation, Haile Selassie proclaimed the "revised" constitution. The constitution provided for the formation of four bodies: the Crown Council, the Council of Ministers, the Senate, and the Chamber of Deputies. The Crown Council served as an advisory body to the emperor; the Council of Ministers, headed by the prime minister, was made responsible for the day-to-day administration of the government. The Senate and the Chamber of Deputies

served as Parliament. Membership to all constitutional bodies was determined by the emperor, except for the Chamber of Deputies, whose members were chosen by popular election. Judicial power was vested in the courts, but judges were appointed by the emperor. Supreme authority over all affairs of the empire, however, was vested in the emperor, who had the power to appoint and dismiss government officials and members of Parliament, determine the organization of all government offices, exercise complete control of the armed forces, and conduct foreign relations at his discretion. The constitution included some liberal jural postulates related to civil liberties and rights—including freedom of religion, freedom of speech and assembly, and the guarantee that no one could be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law. Many of these rights, however, were granted only “in accordance with the law” and subject to the provisions of Article 65, which stated: “Respect for the rights and freedom of others and the requirements of public order and the general welfare, shall . . . justify any limitations upon the rights guaranteed . . . ,” a rather vague provision that made it difficult to challenge a restrictive legislation on constitutional grounds.⁴⁰

The constitution was largely viewed as an expression of a democratic facade with little genuine power. It entailed no substantive dilution of the power of the emperor and also lacked many of the power elements embodied in Western-style constitutions. Major reasons often cited as to why Haile Selassie proclaimed the revised constitution are: (1) It was part of the emperor's effort to provide a formal basis for further centralization and rationalization of his political and bureaucratic power; (2) it served to forestall international criticism of the incorporation by Ethiopia of Eritrea, where an elected parliament and modern administration had existed since 1950; (3) it improved the emperor's image abroad; and (4) it placated the growing educated elites that expressed concern that Ethiopia lagged behind many African countries that were adopting “liberal” constitutions on the eve of independence.⁴¹

Although the constitution incorporated some impressive traditional and modern constitutional principles, it was characterized by a wide range of inherent contradictions that have intrigued many constitutional scholars. The conflicts in the governmental process are summarized by Brietzke:

Ethiopian governmental process mirrored the built-in constitutional conflicts between: three traditional jural postulates (working principles)—imperial aspirations to absolutism, the mutuality of support between the Church and the throne, and the continued Amharization of politics; and five nineteenth century liberal jural postulates—the modernization and accountability of administration, the widening of political participation

through a parliament, the establishment of an independent judiciary committed to the rule of law, somewhat confused concepts of separation of powers, and a catalogue of individual political rights.⁴²

In reality, the constitution, or the conflicting principles it incorporated, made little difference to the actual conduct of government. The collective responsibility of the Council of Ministers never emerged; ministers, including the prime minister, had little independent power in comparison to the throne; and key administrative and ministerial positions were filled on the basis of loyalty to the emperor rather than ability to conduct the affairs of the government. Haile Selassie was such an astute and successful negotiator, manipulator, and power broker that opportunities for political conflict were limited. The institutions of government, in so far as such institutions could be said to have existed, were introduced. These were based on some Western models but were never allowed to act autonomously. Personal connections around the palace and loyalty to the emperor counted more than individual competence. In short, there existed, as Clapham puts it, "a dual structure of government, in which traditional modes carried on, more or less undisturbed, behind a front of modern institutions."⁴³ When the imperial power was openly challenged—as in the cases of the 1968 tax revolt in Gojam, the 1963–1970 Bale insurrection over land taxation, the Eritrean separatist movement (since 1962), and Somali irredentism (since 1960)—it was dealt with through a demonstration of power, although not always with success.

— On the diplomatic front, Haile Selassie made a concerted effort to establish contact with foreign powers. Ethiopia was one of the first states to join the League of Nations and subsequently to become a member of the United Nations. In 1950, Haile Selassie succeeded in winning the support of the UN General Assembly for the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia; in 1962, the Eritrean parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of unity with Ethiopia. His efforts to help form the Organization of African Unity (OAU) won him the accolades of African leaders. Addis Ababa became the headquarters of the OAU and, subsequently, of other international and regional organizations. He mediated the Algeria-Morocco crises in 1963 and the conflict in the southern Sudan in 1972. Throughout his reign, Haile Selassie espoused modernization and development and consistently sought help from the United States, Sweden, Israel, the Soviet Union, and other European countries. Foreign investors were invited to participate in Ethiopia's development efforts.

Nonetheless, Haile Selassie's government faced serious contradictions between modernization and traditionalism. In an effort to please



Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, site of the first meeting of the Organization of African Unity and headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Africa. (Ethiopian Tourism Commission)

both the traditional and modern groups, the emperor attempted to maintain a balance between the interests of the two, and in some cases he pitted them against one another. For example, in the case of Parliament, members were to be elected by universal suffrage, but through the use of property qualifications, representation was dominated by the traditional, upper class. Opinions vary on Haile Selassie's modernization efforts. One suggests that he truly represented the traditional class but established modern institutions in order to appease the growing urban class and placate the educated few and to impress the outside world. Another is that he attempted to limit the influence of traditional forces but was realistic enough to compromise and to protect their interests.⁴⁴

His efforts to resolve the contradictions between the traditional and the modern were unsuccessful; particularly in the late 1960s, the contradictions intensified as both competed for dominance. The 1960 attempted coup and the 1974 revolution were episodes in the continuing struggle between those with traditional and modern points of view.

By the early 1970s, it appeared that Haile Selassie had full control of his empire. In many cases, he used the traditional methods of offering

titles and lands, supplemented with occasional visits to different areas, to soothe local tensions. In other cases—such as Eritrea, Ogaden, Bale, and Gojam—military force was used to quell regional and ethnic dissent. Closer inspection made clear that the national integration problem that had nagged Ethiopia for centuries was still unresolved. Consequently, in the last days of his reign, Haile Selassie's Ethiopia was held together not so much by the coherence of its society, but rather by the strength of the central government, which allowed neither dissent nor general participation in its rule.

NOTES

1. Donald Levine discusses foreign images of Ethiopia in his *Greater Ethiopia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), chaps. 1 and 2.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

3. A.H.M. Jones and Elizabeth Monroe, *A History of Ethiopia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).

4. For African and other black communities' reactions on Fascist aggression on Ethiopia, see R.W. Scott, "The American Negro and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934–1936," Master's thesis, Harvard University, 1966; S.K.B. Asante, *Pan African Protest: West Africa and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934–1941* (London: Longmans, 1977).

5. Exceptions must be made of recent materials, which include Taddesse Tamrat, *Church and State in Ethiopia, 1270–1527* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Harold G. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II: Ethiopia, 1844–1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Zewde Gebre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia: A Political Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975); Sven Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence* (London: Heinemann, 1976); and John H. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Selassie Years* (Algonac, Mich.: Reference Publications, 1984).

6. Rubenson, *The Survival of Ethiopian Independence*, pp. 1–2.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 2. See also Akpan's interesting parallel between Liberia's and Ethiopia's survival as independent nations, in M.B. Akpan, "Liberia and Ethiopia, 1880–1914: The Survival of Two Independent African States," in *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol 7, edited by A. Adu Boahen (Paris: UNESCO, 1985), pp. 278–282.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 4. Instances could be cited of the battles of Gundet (1875) and Gura (1876) against the Egyptians and the battles of Dogali (1887), Seati (1888), and Adwa (1896) against the Italians at which the enemy did not expect the Ethiopians to mobilize a large army and launch surprise attacks.

9. John M. Cohen and Dov Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution* (Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1975), p. 1.

10. Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia, *National Atlas of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Mapping Agency, 1981), p. 14.

11. For a general classification of agricultural systems of Ethiopia, see E. Westphal, *Agricultural Systems in Ethiopia* (Wageningen, the Netherlands: CAPD, 1975); H.P. Huffnagel, ed., *Agriculture in Ethiopia* (Rome: FAO, 1961).

12. *Newsweek*, November 26, 1984, p. 50; Jack Shepherd, "Changing Equations in the Horn," *Africa Report* 30:6 (November-December, 1985), p. 23. A recent World Bank report estimated that as many as 1 million might have died because of the drought. See World Bank, *Population, Health and Nutrition Sector Review*, Report No. 5299-ET, September 1985, pp. 80-81.

13. Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC), *Ethiopia: Ten Year Perspective Plan, 1984/85-1993/94*, Addis Ababa, 1984, table 1, p. 72 (in Amharic).

14. For more on mineral resources, see Getaneh Assefa, "The Mineral Industry of Ethiopia: Present Conditions and Future Prospects," in *Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, University of Lund, April 26-29, 1982, edited by Sven Rubenson (Addis Ababa: Institute of Ethiopian Studies, 1984), pp. 617-635.

15. A few writers have recently argued that the history of Ethiopia should begin with the late nineteenth century, implying that the country's history before 1900 refers to Abyssinia and not to Ethiopia. For instance, Addis Hiwet notes, "The deep-seated myth that has for so long enshrined Ethiopia—both the name and the country—still blurs genuine historical understanding. Ethiopia's existence as 'modern state' does not—as the ideologists of the *ancien regime* claim—extend beyond the 1900s. . . ." Such an interpretation of Ethiopian history, often done for ideological reasons to fulfill political objectives in spite of overwhelming evidence based on historical facts, ignores the fact that Ethiopia and Abyssinia have been used interchangeably to refer to the mountain kingdom for about 1,500 years. See Mohammed Hasen, "The Oromo of Ethiopia, 1500-1850: With Special Emphasis on Gibe Region," Ph.d. dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1983, chapter 1; Addis Hiwet, *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London: Review of African Political Economy, 1975), p. 1. For a view that maintains that the names Ethiopia and Abyssinia have been used interchangeably, see Margery D. Perham, *The Government of Ethiopia*, 2nd edition (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 15, and John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 13.

16. Taddesse Tamrat, "Ethiopia, the Red Sea and the Horn," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 3, edited by Roland Oliver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 98-108; Yuri M. Kobishchanov, *Axum* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), p. 64; "Aksum: Political System, Economics and Culture, First to Fourth Century," in *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol. 2, edited by G. Mokhtar (Paris: UNESCO, 1981), pp. 381-400.

17. Taddesse Tamrat, "Ethiopia, the Red Sea and the Horn," pp. 111-112.

18. For an account of this period, see Mordechai Abir, "Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 4, edited by Richard Gray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 537-555; Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia and the Red Sea* (London: Frank Cass, 1980), pp. 69-107.

19. Abir, "Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa," pp. 558–564; for an account of the role of missionaries during this era, see Philip Caraman, *The Lost Empire: The Story of the Jesuits in Ethiopia, 1555–1634* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

20. These include Tekle-Haymanot (1706–1708), Tewoflos (1708–1711), Yostos (1711–1716), Dawit III (1716–1721), Bakaffa (1721–1730), Iyasu II (1730–1755), and Iyoas (1755–1769).

21. The theological controversies focused on the nature of Christ. The "Unionists" (*Tewahdo*) maintained that Christ's human nature, through its union with the divine had become perfect and inseparable. The "Uctionists" (*Qibatoch*), on the other hand, maintained that the union between the two natures of Christ (human and divine) was brought about through the unction (*qibat*) of the Holy Ghost. The Unionists were known as followers of the order of Abune Tekle-Haymanot of Debre Libanos, Shewa, and the Uctionists as followers of the order of Aba Ewestatewos of Debre Damo, Tigray. In the seventeenth century a new controversy emerged between those who had begun to teach *sost lidet* (three births) and those who taught *hulet lidet* (two births) of Christ. Advocates of the *sost lidet* (also known as *tsega lij*) maintained that "Christ was first born in eternity, was born once again and annointed by the Holy Spirit on his incarnation in the Womb of Mary, and finally he was born in time free of the sin of Adam." The *hulet lidet* believers (also known as *wold qib* or *karra haymanot*) rejected the two births because for them the second and the third births were but one. The various factions fought each other and they also sought the support of regional rulers or political factions. The conflict had a major impact in weakening the powers of the church as well as that of the State. See Abir, "Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa," pp. 555–570; Mordechai Abir, *Ethiopia: The Era of the Princes* (New York: Praeger, 1968), pp. 39–40. See also Caraman, *The Lost Empire*, pp. 83–87.

22. The assimilation began with Susenyos, who recruited large Oromo units into his army and settled many of them in various parts of his domain. Abir, "Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa," pp. 537, 548; Abir, *Ethiopia and the Red Sea*, pp. 194–207. Abir's concern that many historians have neglected the Oromo influence on Ethiopian history—through their great migrations, regional alignments, and growth of their political power—is shared by many modern historians.

23. When Queen Victoria of England failed to reply to Tewodros's letter requesting technicians, he arrested several British subjects and Europeans working in Ethiopia, including the British counselor. The queen sent a military expedition under Robert Napier to secure the release of the hostages. Following a brief military encounter, Tewodros realized that the battle was lost and committed suicide before his capture. For more on Tewodros, see Sven Rubenson, *King of Kings: Tewodros of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1966); Donald Crummey "Tewodros as Reformer and Modernizer," *Journal of African History* 10:3 (1969), pp. 457–469.

24. Menelik acknowledged the overlordship of Yohannes in a treaty concluded in 1878 and reaffirmed in 1882. Ras Adal, who was crowned by

Yohannes in 1881 as *Negus* (King) Tekle-Haymanot, retained Gojam. Menelik was recognized as the "king of Shewa and Kefa," and Welo was given to Araya Selassie, the son of Yohannes. The agreement was sealed by the betrothal of Zewditu, Menelik's daughter, to Araya Selassie and Menelik's recognition of Araya Selassie as Yohannes's imperial heir. See Zewde Gebre-Selassie, *Yohannes IV of Ethiopia*, pp. 101–121.

25. For a general account of Menelik's territorial expansion into the south and the east, see Harold G. Marcus, "Imperialism and Expansionism in Ethiopia from 1865–1900," in L.H. Gann and Peter Duignan, eds., *Colonialism in Africa, 1870–1960*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 447–455; D.K. Kofi Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire, 1813–1889* (London: Heinemann, 1975), pp. 96–110. For the administration of the south and the impact of Menelik's settlement policy on the local peasants, see Charles McClellan, "State Transformation and Social Reconstruction in Ethiopia: The Allure of the South," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 17:4 (1984), pp. 657–675; "Perspectives on the Neftenya-Gabbar System—The Example of Darasa," *Africa* 33:3 (Rome, 1978).

26. Marcus, "Imperialism and Expansionism in Ethiopia," p. 448; Darkwah, *Shewa, Menelik and the Ethiopian Empire*, pp. 96–108.

27. Financial crisis and Menelik's problems with France and the railway company forced the abandonment of the last stage, which was to have run from Addis Ababa to Kefa and the White Nile. Marcus, "Imperialism and Expansionism in Ethiopia," p. 446.

28. Menelik signed the Treaty of Wuchale in order to gain Italian recognition of his imperial title. Menelik was concerned about the claim of Ras Mengesha Gugsu (Yohannes's son) to the throne. Thus, Wuchale was "an insurance against the Italian recognition of Mengesha." In return, Menelik ceded Asmera, Massawa, and Bogos to the Italians. See G.N. Sanderson, "The Nile Basin and the Eastern Horn, 1870–1908," in *The Cambridge History of Africa*, vol. 6, edited by J.D. Fage and Roland Oliver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 656.

29. Richard Sherman, *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 32; Marcus, "Imperialism and Expansionism in Ethiopia," p. 438.

30. Sherman, *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution*, pp. 32–36; Bereket Habte Selassie, *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), p. 52.

31. Sven Rubenson, "Adwa 1896: The Resounding Protest," in Robert Rotberg and Ali Mazrui, eds., *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 14.

32. Leonard Mosley, *Haile Selassie: The Conquering Lion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 74.

33. For a detailed account of this period, see *ibid.*, pp. 66–113; Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, pp. 249–281.

34. Ethiopia's request for membership in the League of Nations was favored by Teferi and his supporters, but the application for membership was blocked by a number of European countries on the ground that Ethiopia had not taken

a strong step to suppress slavery. Internally, the isolationists, led by Fitawrari Habte Giyorgis, were less than enthusiastic about the membership. Finally, Italy and France lobbied on Ethiopia's behalf, and Ethiopia was admitted as a full member on September 23, 1923. See Mosley, *Haile Selassie*, pp. 127–142.

35. Marcus, *The Life and Times of Menelik II*, pp. 206–213.

36. Many of the reform programs began when Haile Selassie was regent. For a general discussion of the reforms made during the regency, see Edward Ullendorff, ed. and trans., *The Autobiography of Emperor Haile Selassie I: My Life and Ethiopia's Progress 1892–1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 65–76; M.B. Akpan, "Ethiopia and Liberia, 1914–35: Two Independent African States in the Colonial Era," in *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol. 7, edited by A. Adu Boahen (Paris: UNESCO, 1985), pp. 729–732.

37. Clapham notes that the characteristics and membership of the nobility cannot be defined with any precision. However, based on roles in the government, we may speak of the "new nobility"—the large cadre of politicians and administrators on whom much of the daily work of the government had devolved—as opposed to the "old nobility"—whose prominence in politics was largely through family ties, landownership, and palace connections. The "old nobility" traditionally had substantial independent power, including the power to maintain its own armies. But through combined traditional and innovative approaches, Haile Selassie curtailed the independent power of the "old nobility," and on the eve of the Italian invasion many of the territories ruled by the traditional nobility (Gojam, Gonder, Shewa) were under provincial rulers loyal to the emperor. See Christopher Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government* (London: Longmans, 1969), pp. 64–75.

38. For a brief account of the anti-Fascist patriotic resistance, see Richard Pankhurst, "The Ethiopian Patriots: The Lone Struggle," *Ethiopia Observer* 13:1 (1970), pp. 40–46; Alberto Sabacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini: Fascism and the Colonial Experience* (Totowa, N.J.: Zed Press, 1985), chapter 18.

39. A January 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian agreement substantially curbed Haile Selassie's power and also made Ethiopia "subject to many of the features of a British protectorate." Haile Selassie was, understandably, dissatisfied with the agreement, but the problem was not corrected until December 1944 when a second Anglo-Ethiopian treaty was signed that eliminated many of the apprehensions of the emperor. See Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 139–141; Christine Sandford, *The Lion of Judah Hath Prevailed* (London: Dent, 1965), chapter 12; Alberto Sabacchi, "Haile Selassie and the Italians, 1941–1943," *African Studies Review* 22:1 (April 1979), pp. 31–34; Sabacchi, *Ethiopia Under Mussolini*, pp. 217–219.

40. For a detailed discussion, see Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government*, pp. 39–40.

41. Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, pp. 270–277; Heinrich Scholler and Paul Brietzke, *Ethiopia: Revolution, Law and Politics* (Munich, 1976), p. 39.

42. Paul H. Brietzke, *Law, Development, and the Ethiopian Revolution* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1982), p. 101.

43. Clapham, *Haile Selassie's Government*, p. 182.

44. See Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, pp. 201-202; Peter Schwab, *Haile Selassie I: Ethiopia's Lion of Judah* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1979), pp. 87-88.

2

Opposition to Imperial Rule

Throughout his reign, Haile Selassie had to simultaneously deal with two major challenges to his empire. These challenges took the form of ethnic and regional separatist movements and opposition to imperial rule coming from various individuals, organizations, and institutions.

ETHNIC AND REGIONAL SEPARATIST MOVEMENTS

Haile Selassie faced serious challenges from both northern and southern provinces in the form of ethnic and regional separatist movements.¹ In the early days of his reign, there were revolts in the northern provinces of Gonder, Tigray, and Gojam, led by provincial nobles. In 1944 the emperor had to rescind his 1942 land-tax schedule when militant opposition in there intensified. The northern provinces were allowed to continue payment of taxes on the traditional basis of tribute to the whole province.

A serious challenge came from Tigray in 1943. The rebellion, known as the Weyane revolt, was against administrative inefficiency and corruption, the appointment of non-Tigray officials in provincial administration, government taxation, and restitution of services associated with *gult* (fief), which the Italians had abolished.² Nationalist feelings in Tigray go back to the time of Yohannes, when Tigray was the leading province in Ethiopia. The Weyane revolt was one of the early organized movements of Tigray nationalism and was crushed only with the help of the British air force.

Gojam continued to be a cause of much concern to Haile Selassie's government throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Unrest there was primarily against land measurement and an attempt to introduce a new agricultural income tax that the people of Gojam viewed as a prelude to changes in their traditional land tenure system. Government tax assessors were chased out by farmers who were determined to block the new tax. The

Gojam unrest continued throughout much of the mid-1960s but subsided in 1968 when Haile Selassie withdrew the new tax, cancelled many years of arrears of taxation, offered amnesty, and replaced some unpopular administrators.³

The most serious of the challenges in the northern provinces came from the separatist movement in Eritrea. The problem in Eritrea dates back to the reigns of Yohannes and Menelik when Italy was making a concerted effort to colonize Ethiopia. Italy colonized Eritrea in 1889, and Eritrea remained under Italian control until 1941 when the British took over the administration of the province following Italy's defeat in World War II. During the British administration (1941–1952), some Eritrean nationalist movements supported reunion with Ethiopia and others opposed it.⁴ Ethiopia had a major national interest in developments in Eritrea and continued to reiterate its long-standing claim to the area.⁵ Historically, the territory known as Mereb Melash (the Ethiopian name for territories between the Red Sea and Mereb River, which demarcates the boundary between Tigray and Eritrea) had been part of Ethiopia when the Italians proclaimed the area to be their colony, calling it Eritrea.⁶ Strategically, Eritrea was vital to Ethiopia, because it contained Ethiopia's only outlet to the Red Sea and because it had been the launching ground for numerous invasions. Ethiopia did not want Eritrea to fall into the hands of any foreign power. Economically, the two countries complemented each other: Ethiopia depended on Eritrea for access to the sea; Eritrea depended on Ethiopia for grain and raw materials. With political union, the economic interdependence would be enhanced to help create a strong national economy. In 1948, a United Nations commission sent to Eritrea to make an appraisal of the political situation found Ethiopia's claims to Eritrea justifiable.⁷ Based on the findings of the commission, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution recommending that "Eritrea shall constitute an autonomous unit federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown." Eritrea remained federated with Ethiopia until 1962, when the Eritrean parliament voted to end the federation in favor of full integration with Ethiopia.⁸

Since 1962, the actions of the Eritrean parliament on the union have been a source of conflict and controversy. The Ethiopian government had made a concerted effort to win the support of the Eritrean parliament on the union vote. Eritrean separatists argue that during the time of the federation (1952–1962), the Ethiopian government carried on a campaign of intimidation, coercion, and bribery that finally led to the vote for union. They charge that the union is illegal because of such actions by the Ethiopian government. It is true that the Ethiopian government actively aided the unionist group, but opponents of the unionists had their supporters as well. Charges and countercharges aside,



A meeting of community leaders from Keren and British government officials with Dr. Eduardo A. Matienzo, UN high commissioner in Eritrea, 1951. (United Nations)

the federation and eventual union of Eritrea with Ethiopia was consummated on the basis of the majority opinion of the UN commission of inquiry, the resolutions of the UN General Assembly, and the decisions of the Eritrean parliament.⁹

With the reannexation of Eritrea, Haile Selassie's government was faced with a separatist movement that called itself the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF). The ELF was initially a Muslim-dominated movement that objected to Eritrea's incorporation into the Christian-dominated empire. The basis of the movement widened to include Christians as Eritrea's population became increasingly dissatisfied with the imperial administration of the province. Eritreans objected to Haile Selassie's centralizing policy that weakened their local power, suppressed opposition groups, and discouraged the use of their languages in schools and government

institutions. In 1970, a split in the ELF led to the creation of a Marxist political group, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Both these groups are dedicated to the objective of an independent Eritrea. Haile Selassie was able to contain the ELF and EPLF; nonetheless, he failed to resolve the conflict in Eritrea.

In the southern provinces, revolts raised feelings of ethnic nationalism. Menelik's conquest may be regarded as the underlying cause of much of the regional conflict in the south, but nationalism did not crystalize into potent political power until the 1960s. Many peasants in areas annexed by Menelik were reduced to living as tenants and sharecroppers by Menelik's invading army. Between 1962 and 1967, land grants made by Emperor Haile Selassie increased the number of northern settlers in the south at the expense of the local farmers and pastoralists. Commercial agriculture thrived while eviction of local tenants and pastoralists continued. As the pauperization of the peasantry in the south grew, ethnic polarization intensified. Although many of the Oromo, who predominate in the southern provinces, were assimilated through conversion to Christianity and intermarriage, some began to resent the plight of the Oromo peasant and the government's deliberate attempt to assimilate them. In 1963, a rebellion took place in Bale province over the payment of taxes, which the government sent the regular army to crush. The conflict was resolved in 1970 when the government declared amnesty and remitted the taxes for that area for the period 1952–1966. But the revolt had sparked a sense of nationalism among the Oromo. In 1963, the Mecha-Tulema Self-help Association was founded, the objective of which was to promote the development of Oromo areas by raising funds from its members. The association gradually began to articulate the dissatisfaction of the Oromo with government policies. The success of the association in attracting prominent Oromos and the associated politicization along ethnic lines began to cause the government much concern. In 1966, the association was banned and its leaders arrested on the grounds that they incited ethnic antagonism. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) had its origin in the Mecha-Tulema Self-help Association.¹⁰

Another important area of concern for Haile Selassie's government in the south was the Ogaden. The problem in Ogaden is connected with Somali irredentism. During the Italian occupation in 1935–1941, Ethiopia and Somalia were lumped together as Italian East Africa, reorganized into provinces corresponding to ethnic divisions. The new Somali province comprised the former Italian Somaliland and most of Ethiopia's Somali-inhabited region of the Ogaden. This territorial reorganization brought all Somalis under one administration and planted the seed of "Greater Somalia." In 1941, when Italy was defeated, the

Ogaden area and Somalia were placed under British trusteeship. The British began to float the idea of "Greater Somalia," which would comprise all areas inhabited by Somali groups; these included the Ogaden in Ethiopia, the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya, Djibouti (former French Somaliland), and former Italian and British Somalilands. Ethiopia objected to the British proposal, and in 1955 Britain transferred Ogaden and the Haud area to Ethiopia. This transfer of territory was considered by most Somalis to be a violation of the treaties signed between British and Somali leaders in 1884–1886.¹¹

When Somalia became independent in 1960, it launched its policy of Pan-Somalism by provoking border clashes against Ethiopia. Through Somali radio broadcasts and supply of arms to "dissident" groups in the Ogaden area, the new government in Somalia began to foster Somali nationalism, calling for the union of all Somalis in the Horn of Africa. Border clashes between Ethiopia and Somalia continued into the 1970s, and Somalia continued to incite the Oromo and Ethiopian Somalis through radio propaganda and supply of arms.

Although the emperor was able to quell the rebellions in Tigray, Gojam, Gonder, and Bale, these rebellions were symptoms of deep-seated flaws in the imperial system, which rarely permitted the peaceful airing of grievances. The emperor failed to resolve the Eritrean and Ogaden separatist movements but managed to control both. None of these movements threatened the emperor's grip over his government. In fact, the emperor had the support of the majority of Ethiopians in defending the national unity of the country. The most serious opposition to the imperial rule emerged not from the periphery (distant provinces) but from the young and educated groups at the center (capital).

RISE OF OPPOSITION TO IMPERIAL RULE

Between 1941 and 1960, opposition to the emperor came from various quarters; the most serious form of opposition was the assassination plot of 1951 by a few noblemen and provincial governors. By the middle of the 1950s, threats from traditional sources had subsided as the nobility and the church had come to regard the emperor as a defender against the forces of modernization embodied by young university graduates who were returning from overseas studies. These young graduates had realized through the postwar African nationalist movements that Ethiopia, in spite of its independence for hundreds of years, lagged far behind African colonies by most measures of social and economic development. It was partly to appease the growing number of dissatisfied individuals that the emperor granted a new constitution in 1955, introduced new legal codes, and launched the first five-year development plan in 1957.

He neutralized the young graduates by absorbing them into the government bureaucracy, where they redirected their criticism more at the inept officials who manned the bureaucracy and less at the emperor.

The abortive coup d'état of December 1960 by the commander of the Imperial Guard and his university-educated brother had as its main proclaimed objective economic and educational development.¹² The rebels made a vague reference to land reform and did not mention the emperor, the church, and the nobility—forces that had stifled political and economic reforms. The emperor had often mentioned his concerns about education, economic progress, and land reform; but he failed to act on his concerns. Based on the rebels' official announcements and their own social and class backgrounds, there is nothing to suggest that their government would have been any more revolutionary, progressive, or democratic than other military governments that subsequently occurred frequently on the African continent. The importance of the failed coup d'état was that it manifested the sentiment of a large number of the educated group in Ethiopia.¹³ It was the most serious challenge the emperor had faced, and the fact that with a little more planning it could have succeeded debunked the myth of imperial invincibility. The experience was a very important lesson to potential coup makers in Ethiopia.

Although the coup d'état failed, it left an indelible mark on the nation, especially on the young and educated groups in the bureaucracy and in the military. An indirect result of the failed coup d'état was a series of initiatives by the emperor to appease his critics. In March 1961, he appointed twenty-five young university graduates to senior positions in government. In April he seemed to blame his ministers for the failures of his government when he charged them with nepotism, shirking their responsibilities, and avoiding making major decisions. He ordered his ministers to consult with the prime minister and stressed that the decision-making functions of the government should be dispersed among senior government officials because " . . . government today in Ethiopia has attained such magnitude that no single man or any few men can control its every aspect and operation. Responsibility must be increasingly delegated to those who have demonstrated themselves efficient and devoted administrators."¹⁴ The emperor stated his support for increased autonomy for provincial administration and encouraged members of Parliament to take an active role in government. His major economic proposal was land reform, and he set an example by distributing some crown land to tenants in Arsi province.

This series of initiatives by the emperor gave the appearance of genuine reform in government and muted opposition from his traditional critics. The silence of the emperor's critics during this period is also explained by the emperor's enhanced prestige in Pan-African affairs,

which led to the signing of the charter of the Organization of African Unity in May 1963 and the selection of Addis Ababa as the OAU's permanent headquarters. By the mid-1960s, however, it became apparent that there was very little substance behind any of the reforms proposed by the emperor. The 1966 land reform bill was scuttled in Parliament; although the bill itself was modest, the emperor did not use his power to press for its adoption. Not until 1966 was the prime minister allowed to select his cabinet under the revised constitution, and even then the reform was empty, as the emperor had the final word about the appointment of ministers. In the same year, final recommendations were made to increase the autonomy of the provinces, but actual autonomy never materialized. The legalization of labor unions and the creation in 1963 of the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU), which had very limited powers, were modest steps in the Ethiopian labor movement. An important reform concerning agriculture was the 1967 Income Tax Proclamation, which abolished the tithe and replaced it with a graduated tax on agricultural income. Its primary objective was not so much to transfer the burden of tax from the tenant to the landlord as to increase tax revenue from agriculture.¹⁵

After 1968, economic conditions continued to deteriorate because of the decline in the price of coffee and the closing of the Suez Canal, which adversely affected the price of both imports and exports. The economic stagnation intensified opposition to imperial rule by various organized groups, spearheaded by the educated class. This group, which numbered about 20,000 in the mid-1970s, grew out of the postwar modern educational system, the new government bureaucracy, and, to a smaller extent, the modern sector of the economy.¹⁶ Almost all graduates of secondary and postsecondary schools were employed by the government in clerical, technical, and professional fields with guaranteed salaries. Access to employment and absence of any competition for these positions had, until the late 1960s, created a docile educated class unprepared to challenge the imperial regime.

Two major forces politicized the educated class. The first came from a variety of organized groups, of which the three most important were CELU; the Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA), the largest professional union in the country; and the National Union of Ethiopian University Students (NUEUS), the most powerful organized group, which served as the springboard for many young radicals of the educated class. The second force that politicized the educated class arose from the dwindling of employment opportunities in the public sector in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which manifested itself in unemployment for new graduates and slow advancement for those already employed and led to an erosion of the privileged position that this group had enjoyed.

The employment situation was made worse by deteriorating economic conditions brought on by drought, famine, and inflation.

The drought that began in 1969 continued into 1972 without any government contingency plan to combat it, despite warnings of impending catastrophe by government officials. The drought and consequent food shortages not only led to the death by starvation of thousands of peasants but also precipitated an inflationary spiral in the price of food crops. This prompted university students to organize demonstrations and campaigns against the government and against merchants who were raising food prices. The economic stagnation further intensified the plight of the poor. The government's inability to deal with these disasters strengthened the determination of the educated class to oppose the imperial system. The period between 1960 and 1974 saw the rise of three opposition groups that were instrumental in overthrowing imperial rule: a militant student movement, a politicized military, and an infant labor union.

The Ethiopian Student Movement

Whereas most of the educated group of the 1950s were absorbed into the bureaucracy and rose to senior positions working through the traditional system, students of the 1960s adopted a critical stance toward the Haile Selassie government. They were not prepared to accept the legitimacy of imperial rule, which they held accountable for Ethiopia's underdevelopment. Their modern education had not only alienated them from traditional authority but had also led them to view some of its values as obstacles to change and modernization. Unlike the earlier generation, this new generation was prepared to challenge imperial rule with the few tools at its disposal. Many of these students had witnessed Ethiopia's underdevelopment through students' service in which students spent a year teaching in rural areas at the end of their third year of university education. They believed that the major prerequisite for political power should be educational qualification, and as citizens educated by public funds, they felt duty-bound to speak on behalf of the millions of deprived Ethiopians. As students, they had not yet developed vested interest in the system, and as a highly visible group, they knew their persistent criticism of the government could not be ignored indefinitely. They earned credibility from the government's failure to resolve the worsening economic and political climate in the country and derived power from their own numbers and from the numbers of their supporters, which were growing every year. They exploited every opportunity to embarrass the government through demonstrations as well as through both official and clandestine pamphlets.

In 1965, university students had their first demonstration, demanding "land to the tiller"¹⁷ when Parliament was considering a bill on land reform. The students demanded a more radical land tenure proposal—such as redistribution of land rather than the mere regulation of tenancy proposed in Parliament. Between 1965 and 1973, there were annual demonstrations by university students against a variety of abuses: the detention of destitutes, Western-inspired fashion shows, lack of educational opportunity, and the death of the student body president under mysterious circumstances. Student activism had received a boost when a citywide university students' union was organized in Addis Ababa in 1967, providing a much broader base for attacks on the government. By 1969, student activism had spread to secondary schools, where similar concerns were voiced about access to quality education and, by 1971, had spread to the provinces. The government sent the police and later the army to stop these demonstrations. Such confrontations intensified the conflict between the students and the government and further succeeded in politicizing segments of the urban population.

But more threatening for the government was the Marxist outlook of the Ethiopian student movement, as indicated by articles published in the student newspaper, aptly called *Struggle*: "The fundamental driving force of history, and thus Ethiopian history as well, is the bitter struggle between the ruling classes and the oppressed classes . . . [and] because our world outlook is based on the class nature of human societies, the purge of our feudal legacy is imperative."¹⁸ This ideological bent found fertile ground among Ethiopian university students in North America and Europe, where freedom of association and expression permitted them to voice their contempt for imperial rule. The Ethiopian Students Association in North America (ESANA), in its journal, *Challenge*, published a Marxist interpretation of the Ethiopian condition. The student movement was also antiimperialist and anti-U.S., denouncing the United States as the prime supporter of the imperial regime. The students made public a 1960 secret agreement in which the United States guaranteed to support the monarchy and Ethiopia's territorial integrity.¹⁹

For four years (1965–1968), the government did not take student agitation seriously, partly because students had refrained from direct attacks on the emperor and partly because the agitation was considered the work of "a few misguided students." In addition, because student activism was a new phenomenon in the country, the government was uncertain about measures to adopt to curtail the demonstrations, other than closing the university for a few days, as it did on several occasions. At the height of student militancy (1969–1973), several students were arrested and a few were given severe jail sentences without any impact on activism. Attempts to involve parents and community leaders to

restrain students, and the expulsion of a few Eastern European diplomats for alleged involvement in student demonstrations, also failed to deter student militancy.²⁰ The only sure way of undermining student militancy would have been closing the university. But this would have alienated parents and hurt the image of the emperor, who had always put a great premium on education, serving as his own minister of education until 1966. Consequently, the government's failure to address student activism encouraged its spread and growth.

The Welo famine and the government's effort to suppress the news about the starvation of thousands of Ethiopians triggered the 1973 student demonstrations.²¹ The three university faculty members who publicized the plight of the famine victims were assigned to obscure provincial administrative posts. By 1974 the momentum against the imperial regime had increased. Students joined the taxi drivers to press for a rollback of gasoline prices and also supported strikes by CELU. This was the beginning of the social turmoil that would bring down the imperial government. Thus, student activism made an important contribution to the fall of imperial rule. Students had yet to prepare for their second objective, the creation of a people's government, which in retrospect proved to be an illusory goal.

Politicization of the Military

The Ethiopian military was estimated to number 45,000 in 1974. The army, the largest and oldest of the services, consisted of about 41,000 soldiers and was organized into four infantry divisions (two with headquarters in Addis Ababa, one each in Asmera and Harer) and other supporting services. The air force was estimated at 2,300 personnel and operated out of three bases, Debre Zeyt (48 km. [30 mi.] south of Addis Ababa), Dire Dawa, and Asmera. The navy was very small, about 1,400 strong. In order to counterbalance the armed forces, there were a police emergency force and a territorial army, with about 5,000 members each and both under the Ministry of Interior. The officer corps numbered about 2,300 in 1974, and of these about 2,000 were in the army. Officers in all three services received their basic training in Ethiopia and many went to the United States and Western Europe for advanced training.

The air force and the navy, which were organized in the postwar period, were small, but the technical nature of their operations meant recruitment of officers with higher levels of education. Hence, the level of politicization in these services was high and opposition to imperial rule also intense. But because of their size, they could not pose a threat to the government. The only credible challenge to the emperor could come from the army, but the army officer corps suffered from serious divisions based on age, educational background, and professional training,

and, until the events of 1974, these prevented the growth of a cohesive officer corps that could intervene politically. Despite such obstacles, developments gradually politicized the Ethiopian military.²²

The abortive coup of 1960 by the Imperial Guard marked a watershed in this process. The soldiers realized that it was their intervention that helped the emperor regain his throne. For the first time, they petitioned for a pay increase, which the emperor readily granted; another demand by soldiers for a pay increase, in 1964, also succeeded. These demands came from the army, which had the lowest pay scale among the three services. The air force and the navy, the newest of the services, had substantially higher pay scales and better working conditions. In 1967, the Defense Ministry started implementing a three-year program to raise the basic pay scale of the army to that of the navy and the air force. Basic pay for the private soldier and noncommissioned officer went up about 100 to 200 percent for the ten-year period between 1961 and 1971.²³ Although such large increases may be explained by the very low pay scale before 1961, they were also a measure of the military's growing political impact.

The high attrition rate in secondary schools, the lack of employment opportunities, and a system of retirement that was introduced in 1961 had led to the recruitment of younger and better-educated soldiers who were less timid about questioning their low pay and substandard living conditions, especially so compared to the luxury enjoyed by senior officers. Many had received training abroad, and over 5,000 others had served in the United Nations forces in Zaire (the Congo) between 1960 and 1964. Such service and training abroad had heightened their political awareness, and they were able to look critically at the management of the Ethiopian armed forces. In addition, enlisted personnel with distinguished records could be selected for officer training, so that many attended evening classes, which also made them more aware politically.

The standard of the officer corps had also improved. Between 1960 and 1974, the two officer training schools for the army (in Holetta and Harer) had graduated over 1,600 officers, about two-thirds of the army's officers. Most of the new officers were better trained than their predecessors, and many service academy graduates also attended colleges and associated with civilian intellectuals who were the prime opponents of the imperial regime. In all three services, junior officers were more politicized than senior and intermediate-level officers by virtue of their education.

Political awareness in the armed forces grew when the army and the police were called upon to deal with student militancy and regional revolts. Many junior officers and soldiers were angered by the indecisive methods by which regional revolts in Eritrea and Ogaden (which engaged

about half of the armed forces) were handled by civilian administrators and the military leadership. The army also had to deal with uprisings in Bale in 1963 and Gojam in 1968 against government taxation policy. Although the operation in Gojam was brief, the one in Bale continued until 1970. Many soldiers came from peasant and tenant families, so that in some cases they were sympathetic to the revolts they had been called upon to suppress, especially so during a period when military takeovers had punctuated the African political scene. Although the "contagion effect" of such military takeovers cannot be measured, their impact on subsequent behavior of the Ethiopian military cannot be discounted. What prevented the military from exerting political influence was the loyalty of senior officers to the emperor, the rivalry and divisiveness encouraged by the emperor between the services and the military leadership, and the efficient spy network.

The military mutiny that precipitated the social turmoil in 1974 started as demands for higher pay and better working conditions—troop rotation, bonuses, and better medical facilities, especially for those serving in remote outposts such as the Ogaden, Negele, and the desert of western Eritrea. These were genuine demands articulated by a new generation of soldiers who would not accept their plight as timidly as had their predecessors.

The Ethiopian Labor Movement

Although the revised constitution of 1955 allowed the right to form or join associations, labor union activity received official sanction only in 1962 with the issuing of the Labor Relations Decree, which was approved and promulgated by Parliament in 1963. The Labor Relations Decree may have been prompted by a series of strikes in late 1961 and early 1962 at the Wonji Sugar Estate Company, the Darmar Shoe Factory, Indo-Ethiopian Textiles, and other smaller firms around Addis Ababa. Such strikes were rare prior to 1960, the exceptions being a strike in 1947 by workers of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway against the company's discriminatory wage and employee retention policy and a general strike in Asmera in 1958, which led to the disbanding of the Eritrean labor movement by the government. The government's hostility to a labor movement prior to 1962 was based on the potential for such a movement to grow into a political force, as it did in many African countries during nationalist movements for independence. In addition, much of the industrial development in Ethiopia was foreign owned and managed, and the only way the government could continue to attract foreign investment while limiting the growth of political activity was by maintaining a weak and timid labor force.

Before the Labor Relations Decree was issued in 1962, the Ethiopian labor movement consisted of workers' mutual aid groups such as *eder* and *meredaja* associations. Members of such voluntary associations made regular payments into a common fund that assisted members financially in such emergencies as accident or loss of job. Such organizations were never allowed by the government to transcend their own industries, thus precluding the possibility of creating more-encompassing organizations. After 1962, plant unions sprouted, and within a year 42 unions with about 10,000 members had been organized. The Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions was recognized and registered by the government in 1963 and adopted a new constitution in 1965. By the end of 1965, 70 unions had been registered, and on the eve of the 1974 revolution there were 167 unions in CELU with 80,000 members.²⁴ Given Ethiopia's population of over 25 million in 1974, the CELU membership was minuscule because the industrial sector (most of which was in Addis Ababa) was very small.

The Labor Relations Decree applied only to the private sector and excluded domestic servants and workers on farms that employed less than ten permanent workers. The proclamation also prohibited members of the civil service and employees of public service institutions—such as the Telecommunications Board, the Addis Ababa Water Supply Company, and the Ethiopian Light and Power Authority (ELPA)—from forming unions. Thus, although a weak labor movement was tolerated, its activities were very closely regulated by the Labor Relations Board, which operated under the Ministry of National Community Development. The board was empowered to settle disputes and enforce agreements between unions and employers. The government influenced the administration and recruitment of the staff of CELU through its control of the Labor Relations Board. Consequently, CELU and its leadership were accused of being an arm of the government, whose objective was to prevent the emergence of a genuine labor movement. Critics of CELU also charged the organization with failure to raise the basic daily wage of unskilled workers, which had remained virtually unchanged for almost ten years.

Beginning in the early 1970s, however, there was a relative increase in the number of strikes. These were believed to have been incited by a growing influence in the labor movement of the University Students Union and the radical intelligentsia, a few of whom worked on the staff of CELU. There slowly emerged a student-labor alliance. Students gave financial and moral support to striking workers of the Wonji Sugar Estate Company in 1967 and 1969; the workers, in turn, provided similar support for striking students in 1969. The higher incidence of strikes may also be explained by the worsening economic conditions that were

mainly the result of increases in oil and food prices. A strike by taxi drivers in February 1974, caused by the government's refusal to allow an increase in taxi fares, started the mobilization of CELU for a four-day general strike beginning on March 7. This was the first successful strike by CELU, and it shook the imperial government, which acceded to most of its demands including salary increases, minimum wages, price controls, pensions, the right to strike, and an amendment to the Labor Relations Decree curbing the excessive powers of the Labor Relations Board. CELU's successes set off a chain of sporadic strikes that, coupled with agitation by students and the military, ultimately brought down the imperial regime.

MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE END OF IMPERIAL RULE

Many factors led to the fall of imperial rule. Although the long-term factors were the corruption and incompetence of government inherent in an autocratic and feudal system, the immediate causes were a severe famine and agitation from students, labor, teachers, and the military. Concerted agitation began in January 1974. There were several interest groups that staged strikes and demonstrations in support of various causes. The first of these was the Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA), which had grievances concerning higher pay, improved working conditions, and its objection to a government proposal for a reform of educational policy. The proposal, which was known as the Educational Sector Review, had been developed with the help of UNESCO and World Bank consultants. It recommended expansion of primary education, limiting enrollment in both high schools and the university, and greater emphasis on vocational education. Although the recommendations were realistic, given the low level of literacy and the disparity in education between urban and rural areas, teachers, parents, and students were opposed to them because they felt the government was explicitly limiting access to better opportunities.

The second interest group that went on strike in February 1974 were taxidriviers who were prevented by the government from increasing fares to cover the cost of increased gasoline prices (resulting from the 1973 Arab oil embargo). The third group who held sporadic demonstrations were students who were also opposed to the Educational Sector Review and who joined in a week-long demonstration (February 14–21) supporting strikes by taxi drivers, teachers, and unemployed people in the capital city and nearby towns. Faced with opposition by these interest groups, the government decided to roll back gasoline prices, granted higher pay for teachers, and postponed indefinitely the imple-

mentation of the Educational Sector Review. But these decisions did not deter CELU from organizing a general strike on March 7 to express the need for political and economic reforms.

What worried the government most in 1974 was a further demand for higher pay by the military. The military reflected the class structure of Ethiopian society.²⁵ At the top of the military structure was a small privileged group of senior officers (colonels and above) who had a vested interest in defending the imperial government. This select group was dominated by the Amhara, although an increasing number of Oromo and Tigray were being admitted. Although some senior officers came from the nobility, most were of commoner background and had risen to their positions because of loyalty, seniority, and sometimes professional ability. In the middle of the military structure were a large number of junior officers from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds. This was a frustrated group that, because their motives were suspect, had no power to influence decisions concerning training and organization of the armed forces. They hoped to rise to command positions in order to effect changes in the military and in society at large but saw little possibility of advancement without the support of senior officers. Their own education and association with civilian intellectuals—and their inability to express their dissatisfaction for fear of reprisals—alienated them from the regime and the military leadership. At the bottom of the military structure were enlisted men who, until the early 1960s, were recruited predominantly from the Amhara and Oromo peasantry. For such soldiers, especially the Oromo, the question of landownership was a vital issue, because many came from poor and tenant families. Their low pay, inadequate housing, and overall living conditions stood in marked contrast to that of senior officers. The inability of the military command to deliver quality food on time compounded problems of low morale among the soldiers, especially those in the remote outposts of western Eritrea, Ogaden, Bale, and Negele.

It was desperate living conditions worsened by drought and inflation that triggered the mutiny in Negele on January 12, 1974, caused ostensibly by the breakdown of the barracks water pump. The soldiers arrested their officers, who preferred to ignore such common and everyday problems. The soldiers were so determined to take matters into their own hands that they even detained the emperor's envoy who had been sent to reassure the soldiers that their grievances would be redressed. On February 24 the soldiers were given a pay increase, but in spite of the pay increase, a larger mutiny erupted in Asmera on February 25, apparently encouraged by the civilian strikes and demonstrations since February 14. Soldiers detained their officers, closed the international airport, and demanded higher pay and pensions and better working

conditions. The mutiny immediately spread to the air force, the Fourth Infantry Division, and other special units in Addis Ababa.

The widespread mutiny and the civilian unrest were symptoms of the government's failure to address the nation's economic and social crisis. The situation was so serious that the entire cabinet resigned on February 27, and the emperor appointed a new prime minister, Endalkachew Makonnen, formerly Ethiopia's UN ambassador and the son of a previous prime minister. The emperor announced that the new prime minister had been directed to produce a new constitution within six months. The prime minister, who was now responsible to parliament, was given a broad mandate to restructure the government and introduce major reforms. A few days later, a thirty-member commission to prepare a new draft of the constitution was announced.

In order to defuse the unrest, the soldiers were granted a second pay increase, and they promptly released their officers and returned to their duties. The government's desire to frustrate the emergence of an alliance between civil and military opposition groups appeared to have succeeded, because civilian groups denounced the soldiers for their lack of national concern beyond their own immediate interests. However, just as the capital city was a hotbed of radical civilian activity, it also nurtured many radical junior officers. On March 1 they circulated leaflets there, demanding that the government implement land reform, create political parties and hold free elections, release political prisoners, allow a free press, and bring to trial former ministers for corruption and dereliction of duty.

It is possible that the demands of the military were developed in cooperation with radical civilian intellectuals in groups such as the Ethiopian University Teachers Association (EUTA), which, a few days later, issued similar demands, including statements about priorities and objectives for the new government. Consequently, these demands were supported with enthusiasm by such groups as CELU and ETA and by students, who went a step further and demanded the resignation of the new prime minister. He was branded a supporter of the imperial system because of his social background and his long association with the government. However, many in the armed forces wanted to give the new prime minister a chance to restructure the government. An intense public debate continued about the nature of government and the types of reforms to be introduced. At the same time, opposition groups staged sporadic strikes and demonstrations through March and April that created a climate of political uncertainty and instability.

Thus, strikes, demonstrations, and mutinies that began as demands for higher wages had now been transformed into demands for political and economic reforms. The agitation within the armed forces was now

being orchestrated by junior officers, whose leadership was welcomed by enlisted men, because the reputation of junior officers had not been tainted by corruption. Beginning in early March, radical junior officers and noncommissioned officers in and around Addis Ababa started holding informal meetings to discuss political developments in the country. These informal meetings between junior officers and enlisted men were gradually upgraded and became informal committees that pressed for more political reforms and concessions from the government and discussed the need to align themselves with civilian opposition groups. An inter-unit informal committee, later known as the coordinating committee, began meeting at the headquarters of the Fourth Infantry Division in late March to discuss ways in which the military could exert political influence in what appeared to be a national crisis.

Toward the end of April, the government appointed a National Security Commission under the chairmanship of the defense minister to maintain law and order and deal with civilian and military agitators. It was the government's last-ditch effort to reassert control over the military and, hence, was a threat to the coordinating committee itself. Throughout May and early June, the National Security Commission attempted to liquidate the coordinating committee and suppress political activism within the military. By this time, however, junior officers and noncommissioned officers had virtually taken control of their units from their commanders. Most of the commanding officers had been appointed less than two months previously at the insistence of junior officers and enlisted men and thus acquiesced in any question of political activity among their troops. The government was, therefore, unable to stop further politicization and radicalization of the military.

The military coordinating committee had already gauged the power vacuum in the country resulting from the weakened grip of the imperial regime and the absence of a political party to lead the opposition. In early June, the military decided to organize such an opposition, and in order to legitimize it, they sought a mandate from the armed forces, who were asked to send to Addis Ababa three representatives per unit: a junior officer, a noncommissioned officer, and an enlisted man. Thus was born the Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army (*Derg*) which officially came into being on June 28, 1974.²⁶ The creation of the *Derg* in open defiance of imperial authority underscored the powerlessness of the government. Because the *Derg* could legitimately claim to represent the armed forces, it had the power to mobilize troops to enforce its decisions, thus denying the imperial system its traditional monopoly over the military. The *Derg* was really buying time to consolidate its position and assessing the sentiment of the people toward the emperor, in preparation for its next political move.

The *Derg* elected Major Mengistu Haile Mariam as its chairman and stated its objective to introduce fundamental reforms. It began to consolidate its power by arresting over 300 prominent supporters of the emperor, including senior military officers and members of the aristocracy and bureaucracy. It pressured the emperor to appoint a new prime minister, Michael Imru, and a popular army general, Aman M. Andom, as defense minister; these were both respected individuals who would comply with the objectives of the *Derg*. It also secured amnesty for political prisoners and pledged a prompt investigation and trial of former officials. In early August, a joint committee of five ministers and six military representatives was created by the *Derg* to help it participate directly in the government. On August 7, the much awaited draft constitution was approved by Parliament. It proposed a constitutional monarchy, an independent judiciary, and a bicameral legislature with a senate of ninety members, to be chosen by local authorities and the cabinet, and a lower house of undetermined membership to be elected by the people. The draft constitution, which also empowered Parliament to elect the prime minister, did not meet the *Derg's* expectations, but it generated public debate, which helped the *Derg* assess the sentiment against the imperial system as overwhelming. Encouraged by this virtual mandate from the people, the *Derg* began to strip the emperor of all power and authority. In quick succession, it abolished the Crown and Military Councils and nationalized the palace and the emperor's land and property. To bring the creeping coup to its finale, the press was encouraged to challenge and discredit the legitimacy of the monarchy. The emperor was accused of holding enormous assets abroad while thousands of Ethiopians starved to death. Finally, deprived of all authority, the emperor showed no resistance when the *Derg* officially assumed power as the Provisional Military Administrative Council (PMAC) on September 12, 1974.

SUMMARY

After the restoration of Ethiopian independence in 1941, Haile Selassie had to contend with several challenges to his authority. These challenges manifested as ethnic and regional separatist movements and as opposition from students, teachers, labor, and the military. There were several revolts in both the northern and southern provinces, among the earliest of which was the 1943 Weyane rebellion. Parts of Gojam rebelled against a land taxation system in the 1960s. The most serious of the revolts has been the continuing Eritrean separatist movement, the causes of which are rooted in Italian colonialism.

The southern provinces were aroused partly by Oromo nationalism. The rebellion in Bale in 1963 was sparked by the refusal of peasants to pay taxes. One of the most serious of the separatist movements was in the Ogaden; supported by the Somali Republic, it led to border clashes between Ethiopia and Somalia. Haile Selassie succeeded in containing these ethnic and regional separatist movements but was not able to resolve them.

Although political opposition to imperial rule had existed since 1941, it had come from traditional leaders. The abortive coup in 1960 by the commander of the Imperial Guard was the first expression of dissent against the imperial rule by a younger generation of educated Ethiopians. Following the abortive coup, the emperor appeared to introduce several minor reforms in government, but none were far-reaching enough to prevent university students, teachers, and labor from demonstrating against the government.

Beginning in the late 1960s, the Haile Selassie government faced severe socioeconomic problems that it had ignored for several years. As the governing body of a feudal system presided over by an absolute monarch, it was unable to accommodate or adapt to the needs of a rapidly changing society nor cope with the corruption and social inequities that it had perpetuated. The government's control over the armed forces enabled it not only to entrench itself in power, but also to prevent the emergence of political associations that could some day provide an alternative to imperial rule. Although civilian groups such as students, labor, teachers, and younger bureaucrats were major forces in the opposition to imperial rule, they lacked political organization and discipline, which allowed the military to pick up the mantle of the imperial power.

NOTES

1. For a general background on regional and separatist movements, see Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), chapters, 6, 7, and 8.

2. Gebru Tareke, "Peasant Resistance in Ethiopia: The Case of Weyane," *Journal of African History* 25:1 (1984), pp. 77–92. Getachew Haile, based on a forthcoming article by Sven Rubenson, argues that the Weyane revolt was the result of an intrigue hatched by the British Foreign Office, which was encouraging the creation of a "Greater Tigray" as an independent kingdom comprising the province of Tigray and the Eritrean highlands, the eastern lowlands, and the ports of Massawa and Aseb. Peace was restored only after the emperor gave one of his granddaughters in marriage to one of the Tigray princes. See Haile, "The Unity and Territorial Integrity of Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 24:3 (1986), p. 480. See also Rubenson, "The Last Unresolved Problem

of Africa in Fifty Years' Perspective," in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa (forthcoming).

3. John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 376–387; Peter Schwab, "Rebellion in Gojam Province, Ethiopia," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 4:2 (Spring 1970), pp. 249–256.

4. The three major blocs were the unionists, the Independence Group, and the Pan-Italy party. The unionists, led by Dejazmach Beyne Baraki and Tedla Bairu, called for the unconditional integration of Eritrea with Ethiopia. The Independence Group, arguing for Eritrea's independence, comprised the Christian separatists (later called the Liberal Progressive party—LLP), led by Woldeab Woldemariam, and the Muslim League, led by Ibrahim Sultan. The Pan-Italy party, composed of settlers and ex-soldiers, wanted the return of Eritrea to Italy under the auspices of UN trusteeship. The unionists were the only group that presented a strong enough front to influence the recommendations of the UN Commission on Eritrea and the subsequent decision of the General Assembly for the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia. For a discussion of the various factions, see John H. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal Account of the Haile Selassie Years* (Algonac, Mich.: Reference Publications, 1984), pp. 196–197, 230; Harold G. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941–1974* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 79–86; Lloyd Ellingson, "The Emergence of Political Parties in Eritrea, 1941–1950," *Journal of African History* 18:2 (1977), pp. 261–281.

5. Imperial Ethiopian Government "Eritrea," Addis Ababa, February 9, 1945. See also Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States*, pp. 51–52 and Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 195–196.

6. It must be borne in mind that Ethiopia's control over the Red Sea coastal area fluctuated over the centuries depending on the power of the emperors. But even when the area was under foreign domination (for example, Turks, Egyptians, or Italians), Ethiopia's claim over the territory remained firm. See Haggai Erlich, *The Struggle over Eritrea, 1962–1978* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), pp. 10–12.

7. The Four Power Commission (representing Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union) visited Eritrea from November 23 to December 14, 1947, and the UN Commission visited from February 24 to April 5, 1950. See UN, Four Power Commission (Deputies), *Final Report on Eritrea* (London, 1948). See also UN, *General Assembly Official Records*, 7th sess., Supplement 15 (A/2188), 1952.

8. According to Spencer, the Eritrean parliament had voted in 1955 and in 1957 for a union with Ethiopia, but the central government in Addis Ababa had declined to accept this decision because it feared international repercussions. It was after the third vote in 1962 that the Ethiopian government accepted the union. See Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 302–305.

9. Several works on Eritrea present different views on the federation and the union. See works by G.K.N. Trevaskis, *Eritrea: A Colony in Transition* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960); Richard Sherman, *Eritrea: The Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1980); Bereket Habte Selassie, *Conflict and Intervention*

in the Horn of Africa (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980); Ellingson, "The Emergence of Political Parties in Eritrea, 1941-1950," pp. 261-281.

10. Paul Baxter, "Ethiopia's Unacknowledged Problem: The Oromo," *African Affairs* 77 (July 1978), pp. 290-291; "The Problem of the Oromo or the Problem for the Oromo," in I.M. Lewis, ed., *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 140.

11. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 272-276, 282-283.

12. Richard Greenfield, *Ethiopia: A New Political History* (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 403. See also Christopher Clapham, "The Ethiopian Coup d'État of December 1960," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 6:4 (1968), pp. 495-507.

13. For more on educated Ethiopians' views on the coup, see Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941-1974*, pp. 153, 172-173.

14. Ethiopian Government, *Selected Speeches of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I*, November 2, 1961 (Addis Ababa, 1967), pp. 422-423.

15. Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, pp. 127-129.

16. Marina Ottaway and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1978), p. 23. For a 1970 estimate, see Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, p. 182. The social and ethnic origins of the educated class were diverse, although there was a predominance of northerners (Amharas, Tigreans, and Eritreans) rather than southerners (especially the Oromo), and more were from urban than from rural groups. For a class analysis of the revolution, see John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978).

17. For a brief account of the Ethiopian student movement, see Legesse Lemma, "The Ethiopian Student Movement 1970-1971," *Northeast African Studies* 1:2 (1979), pp. 31-46; Randi R. Balsvik, *Haile Selassie's Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1977*, NEAS Monograph No. 6 (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1985).

18. University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA), *Struggle* 5 (November 17, 1969), p. 1.

19. *New York Times*, October 19, 1970. For more on U.S.-Ethiopian relations, see Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States*, chapter 4, pp. 70-115.

20. Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, pp. 359-361.

21. See Jack Shepherd, *The Politics of Starvation* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1975).

22. For a fuller account of the politicization of the Ethiopian military during the period 1960-1974, see Yohannis Abate, "Ethiopia: The Origins of Military Intervention," *Northeast African Studies* 2:3 (1980-1981), 3:1 (1981), pp. 1-14. See also Donald Levine, "The Military in Ethiopian Politics: Capabilities and Constraints," in H. Bienen, ed., *The Military Intervenes* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1968), pp. 5-34; and Ross R. Baker, "The Ethiopian Army and Political Stability: Prospects and Potentials," *Middle Eastern Studies* 6, no. 3 (October 1970), pp. 331-339.

23. Yohannis Abate, "Ethiopia: The Origins of Military Intervention," pp. 4-5.

24. Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion*, p. 166.

25. Yohannis Abate, "Civil-Military Relations in Ethiopia," *Armed Forces and Society* 10:3 (Spring 1984), pp. 382-384.

26. *Derg* is the Amharic word meaning "committee" or "council." It was first used to refer to the armed forces coordinating committee that was formed on June 28, 1974. The word continues to be used to refer to the PMAC.

3

Military Rule

POLITICS

The *Derg* announced its intervention in a proclamation denouncing imperial rule as the cause of the country's economic, social, and political problems and announcing the necessity "to establish a strong provisional administration dedicated to serve the public good and capable of developing Ethiopia and coping with various security problems at this transitional period." Parliament was dissolved "until the people elect their genuine representatives in truly democratic elections." The constitution was suspended, and the crown prince, who was abroad on medical treatment, was designated king with "no power in the country's administrative and political affairs." (The monarchy was abolished in March 1975 after the PMAC felt secure in its position.) It was also proclaimed that "all existing laws that do not contravene the provisions of this proclamation and those of future orders shall remain in effect." Strikes and unauthorized demonstrations were prohibited, and a special military tribunal was "established to try those who contravene the orders and also to try former and present government officials who may be charged with corruption and abuse of power."¹

The PMAC proclamation led everyone to believe that military rule was temporary and would last only "until a legally constituted people's assembly approves a new constitution," a statement that raised the hopes and expectations of the educated class. The entire cabinet was retained with the exception of the prime minister, who was appointed advisor to the PMAC. General Aman was appointed chairman of both the PMAC and the Council of Ministers and was also named defense minister. Majors Mengistu Haile Mariam and Atnafu Abate were appointed first and second vice-chairmen of the PMAC. Several committees chaired by PMAC members were created, with responsibilities for foreign affairs, defense, economy, administration, information and public relations, legal affairs, internal security, and *zemecha* (literally, total mobilization, as in war; the Development Through Cooperation Campaign).

A commission for drought relief was established in order to provide food and shelter to thousands of famine victims. These committees transmitted PMAC decisions to their corresponding ministries.

The chairmen of these committees and the chairman and first and second vice-chairmen of the PMAC served as the de facto executive council of the military government. Although most of the officers and enlisted men in the PMAC deferred to this executive council, decision-making by the PMAC continued to be difficult because of the lack of experience in government and the disparity in educational backgrounds among PMAC members. Even within the de facto executive council, powers and responsibilities were not clearly delineated between the chairman and the two vice-chairmen of the PMAC. General Aman, as head of state and chairman of the PMAC, expected to exercise authority with little or no opposition from a group of unknown junior officers, who, for their part, were determined to prevent the emergence of another autocrat.

The Eritrean conflict was the first major crisis for the PMAC and also led to the death of General Aman. On November 22, 1974, he was killed while resisting arrest for allegedly refusing to assign additional troops to Eritrea, where separatist guerrillas had stepped up their campaign against government troops. As an Eritrean, he was confident that he could end the conflict by negotiation and resigned his chairmanship when he was overruled by the PMAC leadership. Because of his popularity, his resignation was considered a threat to the PMAC; hence the decision to arrest him. On the same night, over fifty of the most powerful figures of the imperial regime were executed. It was widely believed that the executions were designed to minimize the impact of the general's death, but Aman's death only served to alienate many Eritreans and provided a great stimulus to the Eritrean separatist movement. This action escalated the conflict in Eritrea and was responsible for the reverses against government troops until the counteroffensive of 1978. The commander of the Second Division in Eritrea, General Teferi Bante, replaced General Aman as head of state and chairman of the PMAC.

But a more serious opposition to the PMAC came from the civilian elite, who wanted the military to hand over power to an elected civilian government. The need for democratic elections became more pressing during the first two months of military rule when thousands of students and labor held demonstrations in the capital city demanding a people's government. Student demand for democratic elections was dealt a mortal blow when the PMAC decided in December 1974 to close the university and the last two years of secondary schools in order to send the students throughout the country on a *zemecha*. They were to teach and explain

the objectives of the revolution. The students resisted the scheme, because they wanted a revolution under a democratic government, not under military rule, and they felt the scheme was designed to prevent them from agitating. But once they realized the PMAC's determination to proceed with the *zemecha* (and the penalty for nonparticipation, which was ineligibility for continued study or employment), they comforted themselves with the possibility of indoctrinating the peasantry. The duties of the students became more specific after the declaration of socialism and the land reform proclamation of March 1975, which nationalized rural land and abolished tenancy. The students' responsibilities included helping to establish peasant associations that would implement the land reform proclamation.

CELU had also threatened to go on strike in support of democratic elections, but the detention of its leaders by the PMAC and disunity within the young labor movement prevented the strikes and seriously undermined the effectiveness of any challenge by labor to the PMAC. In December 1975, the PMAC published a proclamation replacing CELU with a new All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU). The proclamation upheld the principle of the right of workers to organize and strike but stressed that the main function of AETU under the newly declared socialist economic policy was to increase productivity. As the labor movement in Ethiopia was young, many labor members had not yet developed a strong sense of identification with it. Hence, the rank and file of labor timidly accepted the AETU, while the leadership of CELU served time in prison.

During the first eighteen months of military rule, a series of socialist programs was adopted, the most important of which included land reform and the peasant associations. At the same time, the PMAC was able to intimidate and create disarray within the civilian opposition by detaining many leaders of labor, teacher, and student groups because of their agitation against continued military rule. The PMAC's hand against the opposition was strengthened by a split within the civilian elite between supporters and opponents of military rule. Supporters saw the PMAC's leadership as necessary to strengthen the revolutionary movement, whereas opponents saw the PMAC as frustrating the evolution of a people's revolutionary movement.

The civilian leadership—both supporters and opponents of the military government—included members of the Ethiopian student movement, and many were avowed Marxists who had lived in self-imposed exile in Europe and North America during the imperial regime. During the last two months of imperial rule and immediately thereafter, several members of the student movement abroad returned and joined the radical civilian elites who had already obtained an advisory role to the *Derg*.

This group provided the *Derg* with the blueprint for the socialist orientation that it adopted, and the *Derg*'s reputation was enhanced because it accepted this ideological and intellectual guidance. The civilian intellectuals enjoyed their proximity to the center of power, where they could actively promote their vision of a socialist state. Although apprehensive that the military would frustrate the revolution by usurping power, they had not prepared themselves for this eventuality nor for the possibility of a split within their own ranks.

The PMAC's refusal to hold elections was viewed by many disgruntled intellectuals as a betrayal of the popular uprising that had toppled the imperial regime, and in the summer of 1975 they went underground to form the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary party (EPRP). The EPRP's objective was to organize a political party made up of a coalition of the middle class, the urban working class, and peasants. This was to be accomplished by calling a popular national assembly to draft a constitution and prepare for elections. The party received a great stimulus when students returned from their year-long task of organizing peasant associations. The EPRP published its own interpretation of a socialist people's government in its clandestine publication, *Democracia*. Meanwhile, the party had infiltrated the schools (where they had an enthusiastic following), both peasant and urban associations, the military, and government departments.

The potential mass appeal of the EPRP was a primary factor in the PMAC's announcement of its Programme of the National Democratic Revolution (PNDR), "in order to advance the revolution of the broad masses of Ethiopia and guide it towards its ultimate goal. . . ." The PNDR stated that "the objective of the national democratic revolution is to liberate Ethiopia from the yokes of feudalism and imperialism and to lay the foundations for the transition to socialism." (For full text, see Appendix.) In order to promote this effort and encourage wider political participation, the Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA) was established under the civilian wing that was supporting the PMAC. The PMAC's objective was to undercut EPRP in attracting mass support and to refute EPRP allegations that the PMAC had usurped power that legitimately belonged to the masses and was exercising authority without any mandate from the people. The PMAC gave permission to POMOA to organize a rival political party, the All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (*Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake*—MEISON), with official sanction to establish cadres throughout the country.

The debate between EPRP and MEISON appeared in newspapers and in the mushrooming underground publications, two of which—*Democracia* (EPRP) and *Voice of the Masses* (representing the views of MEISON)—carried Marxist analyses of the Ethiopian political situation.²

Both the EPRP and MEISON agreed in principle that the transition from feudalism to socialism could not be accomplished by the proletariat, but by a coalition of all the progressive forces in the country. Whereas MEISON was determined that the national democratic revolution could be guided by the military as progressive members of the coalition, the EPRP refused to recognize the PMAC as a progressive force. Although both sides were ardent Marxists, they were diametrically opposed on the nature of the revolution: MEISON wanted a revolution guided from the top, whereas EPRP wanted a revolution guided by a coalition of grass-roots groups. The EPRP denounced the PMAC as Fascist for harassing those opposed to its leadership, for imprisoning labor leaders, and for preventing students from continuing to politicize the peasantry. MEISON, in turn, labeled the EPRP as anarchist because of its demand for full and unqualified democratic rights for all citizens. The two antagonists were also divided on the question of ethnic separatist movements that were challenging the military government. Both the EPRP and MEISON recognized the right of nationalities (ethnic groups) to self-determination, but for the EPRP this included the right to secede. MEISON, however, held that self-determination could be exercised only within the context of a united Ethiopia in accordance with the PMAC's Programme of the National Democratic Revolution, which they (MEISON) had helped author.

The difference between the two groups on the issue of nationalities reflected a division that had existed within the Ethiopian Students Association in North America (ESANA) in the late 1960s and was influenced by the Eritrean separatist movement. A younger group of ESANA members who were active in the student movement in Ethiopia felt that any progressive socialist group should support self-determination for nationalities, including secession from a repressive regime.³ The older established leadership of ESANA, which preferred to view the Eritrean conflict as an armed struggle against feudal oppression, felt it deserved the support of all progressive forces with which the student movement identified.⁴ But this group also believed that if the Eritreans were fighting for independence, they were undermining the solidarity of the Ethiopian masses—who also suffered from feudal oppression—without which imperial rule could not be overthrown. The older group therefore supported self-determination leading to autonomy and not secession.

There were no differences between members of EPRP and MEISON in social, ethnic, regional, or class backgrounds. Both groups were predominantly members of the small middle class. It was believed by some that the EPRP was dominated by Amharas and the Tigray, whereas MEISON was the stronghold of the Oromo. The leaderships did come from those ethnic groups, but the memberships were broadly based,

although the EPRP was better represented and organized in most parts of the country than was MEISON. On the other hand, because MEISON had the support of the PMAC, it was better able to recruit members of the bureaucracy, where it appeared stronger.

The conflict between the two groups escalated into urban terrorism. The PMAC launched its "red terror" to counter the opposition's "white terror." The ensuing conflict, between November 1977 and May 1978, claimed the lives of thousands of students. The government empowered neighborhood militias to root out EPRP members and supporters, and by mid-1978 the EPRP had virtually ceased to exist in Addis Ababa, its stronghold. The EPRP took its armed struggle into the rural areas of northern Ethiopia, in Tigray and Gonder, where it operated in cooperation with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). A conflict later developed between the EPRP and the TPLF over the question of the ultimate objective of their struggle against the military government. The EPRP held that class consciousness should transcend national consciousness, and that national struggles, such as that conducted by the TPLF, should be subordinate to multinational struggles. The EPRP argued that "Tigray was an integral part of Ethiopia and that the EPRP, as an all-Ethiopian organization, was the legitimate body to conduct a liberation campaign in Tigray."⁵ This disagreement erupted into open warfare, which was decisively won by the better-organized TPLF. The EPRP was forced out of Tigray into a remote and rugged corner of northwestern Gonder (close to the Sudan border), a region that has traditionally known little or no government presence. There they temporarily succeeded in organizing peasant militias against the government. But the growing strength of the PMAC, problems of logistics, severe operating conditions, and dissatisfaction over EPRP leadership gradually took their toll, and in early 1980, most of EPRP ranks started crossing into Sudan to join the growing number of Ethiopian refugees.

MEISON was organized in 1976 by Haile Fida, a French-educated Marxist and the most influential advisor to Mengistu. Because of its access to Mengistu, MEISON was given responsibility to organize and run the Yekatit '66 Ideological School. This broadened MEISON's base of support and thereby enhanced its influence in the government. Consequently, it was able to build up support in labor, urban, youth, and peasant associations and in the bureaucracy, from which it successfully recruited many members.

The alliance between PMAC and MEISON was brief and lasted only until mid-1978. Although the two groups cooperated to eradicate the EPRP, they were potential antagonists and were competing for political power and control. In order to prevent MEISON from emerging

as the only dominant party, Mengistu initiated the organization of *Abiotawi Seded* (Revolutionary Flame), a party dominated by the military. The PMAC started undermining MEISON, which attempted to strengthen its position vis-à-vis the PMAC in various associations and organizations. The PMAC also frustrated (by intimidation and threats of assassination) MEISON's plan to raise and indoctrinate newly recruited militia, which would have improved its position in its contest for power against the PMAC. The threat of a political decapitation appeared so imminent that MEISON mobilized its cadres and militias to put into effect a premature plan for a coup against the PMAC. The plan failed, and MEISON was outlawed. Haile Fida was arrested (later believed to be executed), and a few surviving members went underground.

In addition to the EPRP and MEISON, four small Marxist-oriented political groups emerged during the height of the political debate. As all these gave varying degrees of support to the PMAC, they were represented in POMOA. These were the Labor League (*Wez Ader*), the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization (MALERID), the Ethiopian Oppressed Revolutionary Struggle (ECHAT), and the military-inspired *Abiotawi Seded*. In February 1977, MEISON and these four groups had signed a communiqué to form a common front known as the Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations (EMAL EDH). The platform of the front included some of the main points of the Programme of the National Democratic Revolution, such as the need to speed up the party formation process and the creation of a revolutionary army made up of workers, peasants, and other progressive forces.

Following the emergence of this front, there were expectations that it would form the core of a national political party. But the PMAC was not ready to organize a national party, for fear that such a party would be dominated by the civilian intellectuals who ran many of these political groups. The PMAC was also suspicious, and rightly so, about the proposal to form a revolutionary army outside its control. In addition, the violent demise of well-organized parties such as EPRP and, later, MEISON at the hands of the PMAC was enough to convince these small and loosely organized political groups that any attempt to create a party would be doomed. Indeed, by July 1979, the PMAC's suspicion and intolerance of civilian organized groups had led to the disappearance of these political groups through intimidation and the imprisonment of their leaders. In December 1979, the PMAC used the absence of a viable civilian political organization as a rationale to create a Commission to Organize a Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE). COPWE immediately assumed full control of all political cadres including those in the military.

The only non-Marxist opposition to the PMAC was the London-based Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU). It was organized in early 1975 by General Iyasu Mengesha (former chief of staff of the armed forces) and the former governors of Gonder and Tigray, both of whom were married to the emperor's granddaughters. EDU had earlier been identified as a royalist group because of its desire to return the monarchy but soon downplayed its imperial attachment in order to broaden its base of support. In September 1976, EDU published a platform that emphasized a democratic political system and supported civil and political rights and respect for private property. The platform brought it some attention from groups that had been alienated by the PMAC's radical socialist programs and opposition to democratic election. EDU attracted support from outside Ethiopia when in 1976 Sudan pledged its assistance following an alleged Ethiopian-Libyan conspiracy to overthrow President Jaafar Numeiry. EDU was able to train a small guerrilla force and to launch attacks against the PMAC near the Ethiopia-Sudan border in Gonder beginning in early 1977. EDU raised a peasant militia in Tigray and Gonder and continued sporadic campaigns against PMAC forces until 1980. The group finally broke up because of conflict within the leadership and its own untenable military posture. It was unable to attract sufficient financial support, whereas the PMAC's military strength had increased through Cuban and Soviet military aid.

Rivalry existed among the PMAC leadership.⁶ The chairmanship of the PMAC and of the various committees had been assigned at a time when the military was not expected to overthrow the government. But after the PMAC came to power, it became necessary to reassign responsibilities to make the PMAC more efficient and also to reapportion power to prevent the emergence of a dictator. This need became evident when Mengistu began assuming unprecedented power. In mid-1976, the third ranking member of the PMAC, Major Sisay Habte, his two PMAC member assistants, and General Getachew Nadew, the commander of government forces in Eritrea, were executed by Mengistu for advocating negotiation to resolve the Eritrean conflict. Sisay and Getachew had encouraged the war-weary troops to petition the PMAC to negotiate with Eritrean guerrillas. Mengistu interpreted this as a mutiny against the PMAC (although the PMAC had itself come to power by mutiny).⁷ In addition, another prominent PMAC member, Major Kiros Alemayehu, died while under arrest on charges that were not disclosed. Subsequently, a few PMAC members fled the country out of fear of incurring Mengistu's wrath, frustrated by the PMAC's inability to limit Mengistu's power. The proposal to restructure the PMAC was, therefore, partly designed to prevent Mengistu from becoming dictatorial.

The new reorganization plan, which was announced in December 1976, divided the PMAC into three bodies: a seventeen-member Standing Committee, a forty-member Central Committee, and a congress consisting of all PMAC members.⁸ General Teferi Bante was given increased powers as chairman, head of state, and commander in chief. Colonels Mengistu and Atnaфу were confirmed as first and second vice-chairmen. Mengistu retained the chairmanship of the Council of Ministers but lost everything else to General Teferi and to the newly created position of secretary general. The new reorganization enhanced the powers of those PMAC members who were sympathetic (although discretely so) to the EPRP and supported a negotiated settlement of the Eritrean conflict, unlike Mengistu who was anti-EPRP and wanted to resolve the Eritrean conflict militarily. But on February 3, 1977, Mengistu, in a surprise move, executed seven of his opponents, including General Teferi Bante, and assumed full power himself. He eliminated his vice-chairman, Colonel Atnaфу, in November 1977 and has since remained the undisputed leader of the government.

ORGANIZATION

The PMAC and the Workers' Party of Ethiopia

The Provisional Military Administrative Council, or *Derg*, had consisted of over 100 members (the number and identity of the entire membership has never been made public). The council lacked structure and organization until December 1976, when a three-tier organization was adopted: a seventeen-member Standing Committee, a forty-member Central Committee, and a congress consisting of all PMAC members. After 1977, the membership of these three groups was reduced. Many among the original members of the council were appointed to various positions in government, several were purged, still others fled the country. After Mengistu seized power, the council lost its authority and became irrelevant as a deliberative and decision-making body. Only nine of the original members, whose loyalty to Mengistu was proven, and who made up the Standing Committee of the PMAC, held any positions of influence. Decisions are now taken by Mengistu alone, sometimes in consultation with members of the Standing Committee. He is assisted by PMAC Secretary General Fikre Selassie Wogderes (Figure 3.1).

The council operates through subcommittees chaired by members of the Standing Committee. The subcommittees are for political/military affairs, foreign affairs, social, economic, internal security and defense, administration and legal affairs, information and public relations, relief and rehabilitation, and *zemecha*.

SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA: THE POLITICAL SYSTEM, 1984

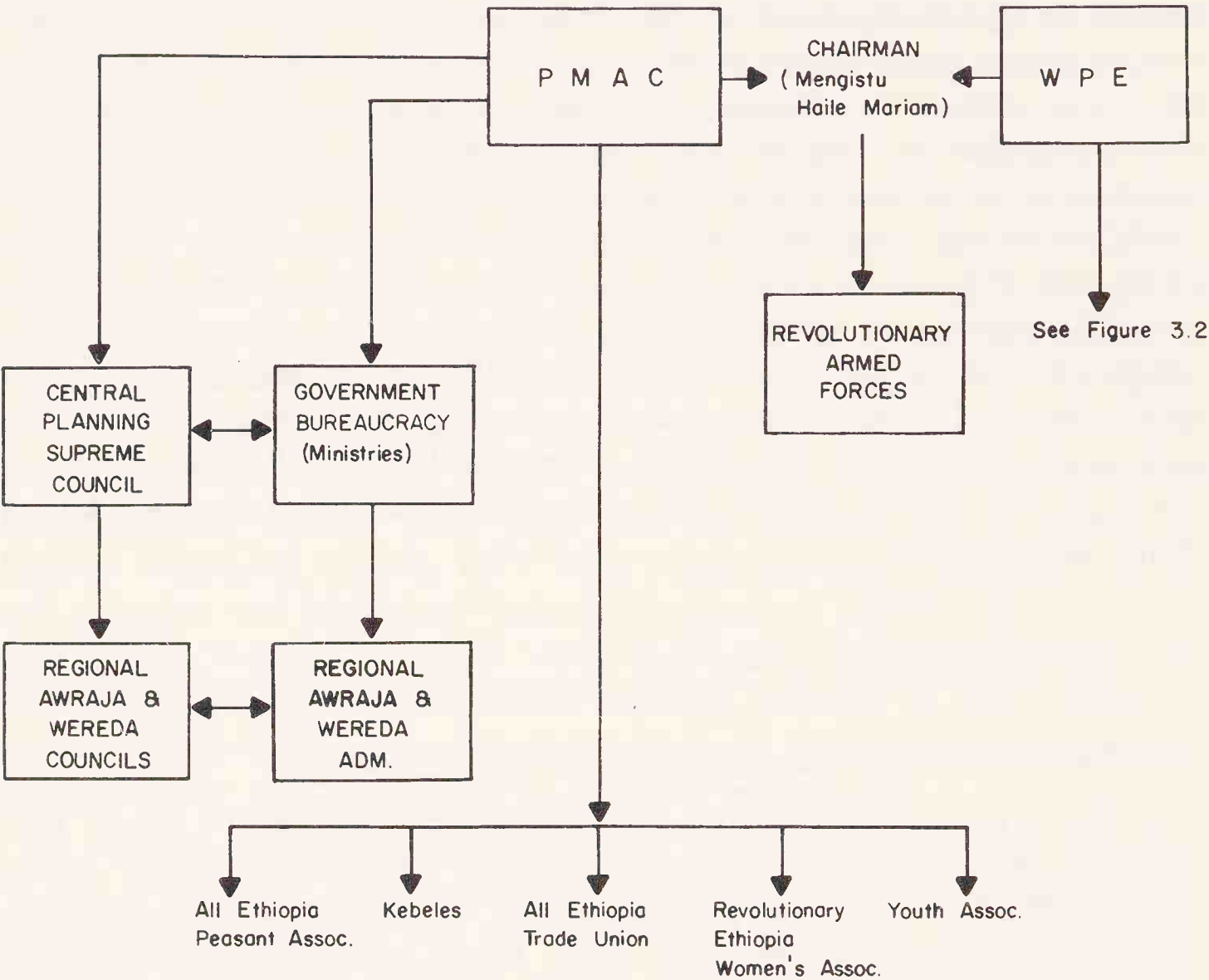


FIGURE 3.1

In order to provide a firm foundation and direction to the revolution, the PMAC began the process of building a party by creating COPWE in December 1979. COPWE's organization was similar to PMAC's and consisted of executive and central committees and congress, all chaired by Mengistu. The seven executive committee members were all also members of PMAC's standing committee. COPWE's central committee of ninety-seven members also consisted of the entire central committee of the PMAC and included all cabinet ministers and about seventy members of the armed forces. In spite of COPWE's objective to represent the working class, the central committee included only two women and no representatives of trade unions and peasant associations. Workers and peasants were represented in the powerless congress of COPWE, which convened once a year.

COPWE was formally dissolved in September 1984 during a five-day congress marking the tenth anniversary of military rule. The congress established the Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), the first political party in Ethiopia's history. The PMAC, however, remains intact as an exclusively military institution to guarantee the supremacy of the military until a constitution is drawn and a people's republic proclaimed. In February 1986 the PMAC announced the creation of a commission responsible for drafting a constitution and publicizing it. In June 1986 the commission submitted the draft constitution for popular discussion, and in February 1987, in a referendum, the draft constitution was approved by 81 percent of the registered voters. The creation of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is believed to be imminent, perhaps in September 1987.

The WPE is organized hierarchically, beginning with primary organizations in members' workplaces and residential areas and conferences in each administrative unit at *wereda* (subdistrict), *awraja* (district), and regional levels.⁹ All party members participate in a congress at the national level. The organizations at each of these levels elect organs that direct the activities of the WPE at the respective territorial units (Figure 3.2). The Congress has about 2,000 members. In addition, a Central Committee of 136 members (and 64 alternates) and a Politburo of 11 members (and 6 alternates) complete the WPE's organization. According to the rules of the WPE, the Congress is the superior leading organ of the party and is convened once every five years. The Central Committee may call an extraordinary congress within a shorter period of time when it deems such action necessary. The regular conference of a region also takes place once every five years; conferences of *awraja* and *wereda* convene twice every five years.

Among the most important responsibilities of the Congress are: charting out organizational and ideological work of the WPE, deciding its domestic and foreign policy, giving directives and decisions on national economic development plans, and strengthening the defense forces. The Central Committee directs the WPE between congresses and holds ordinary meetings once every six months. Its main responsibilities include ensuring the implementation of the program and rules of the WPE and decisions of the Congress. The Politburo leads the party between sessions of the Central Committee. It follows up and guarantees compliance with and timely implementation of the resolutions and guidelines of the Congress and the Central Committee.

The Congress of the WPE elected Mengistu as its secretary general. The WPE is dominated by the military, although there are civilians in many important positions both in the 11-member Politburo and the 136-member Central Committee. The 7 members of the executive committee of COPWE have all been appointed to the Politburo, and 4

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKERS' PARTY
OF ETHIOPIA, 1984

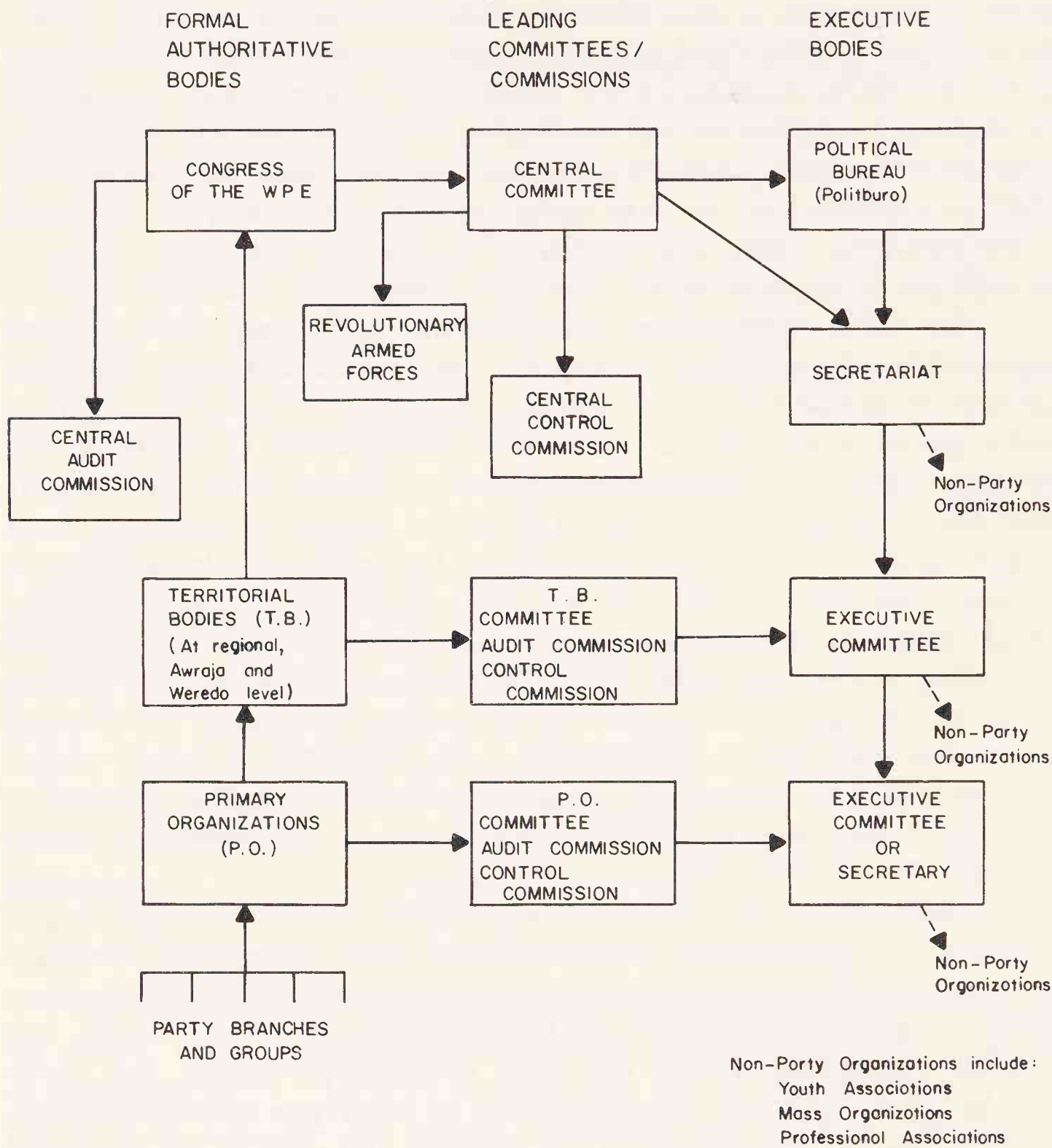


FIGURE 3.2

civilians have been added; of the 6 alternate members to the Politburo, 4 are also civilians. The Central Committee of the WPE consists of 91 (out of 97) members of COPWE's central committee; all 22 cabinet ministers (half of whom are military officers) and all commanders of the services and military sectors, as well as other senior members of the defense establishment, are appointed as full or alternate members. Included are 22 generals (5 as alternate members), all 36 members of

the PMAC's standing and central committees, and military commissars, whose responsibility is to organize national military service as decreed in 1983. The civilian membership of the Central Committee includes the chairmen of the All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU) and the All-Ethiopia Peasant Association (AEPA) and several local representatives of trade unions and peasant associations.

The day-to-day work of the WPE is conducted under ten commissions that report to the Politburo and the Central Committee. Each commission is led by a Politburo or Central Committee member—five officers and five civilians. The commissions are: justice, defense and administration, organization, ideology, economic affairs, nationalities, general services and finance, foreign affairs, central office and secretariat, audit, and control.

The Politburo and Central Committee include senior members of the government and bureaucracy, whereas the Congress represents a cross-section of soldiers, workers, peasants, and junior members of the bureaucracy. It was estimated that about 31 percent of the delegates to the 1984 Congress were workers and peasants, and the rest were soldiers and government officials; about 80 percent had received political indoctrination. Considering the small percentage of workers and peasants, and that only 6 percent of the delegates were women, the party is far from being a true representative of the workers of Ethiopia.¹⁰

The following comprises the leadership of the PMAC and the WPE:

Mengistu Haile Mariam secretary general of the WPE, chairman of the PMAC and the Council of Ministers, and commander in chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces

Fikre Selassie Wogderes Politburo member, secretary general of the PMAC and deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers

Fisseha Desta Politburo member, assistant secretary general of the PMAC and secretary of Justice, Defense and Administration Commission of the WPE

Lt. General Tesfaye Gebrekidan Politburo member, member of the Standing Committee of PMAC

Berhanu Bayih Politburo member, member of the Standing Committee of PMAC and minister of Foreign Affairs

Haddis Tedla Politburo member, member of the Standing Committee of the PMAC and deputy prime minister

Legesse Asfaw Politburo member, member of the Standing Committee of the PMAC and secretary of the Organization Commission of the WPE

Hailu Yimenu Politburo member and deputy prime minister (civilian)

Amanuel Amde Michael Politburo member and minister of justice (civilian)

Alemu Abebe Politburo member and deputy prime minister (civilian)

Shimelis Mazengia Politburo member, and secretary of the Ideology Commission of the WPE (civilian)

The alternate members of the Politburo of the WPE are:

Teka Tulu secretary of the Audit Commission of the WPE

Fassika Sidelil secretary of the Economic Commission of the WPE (civilian)

Shewandagne Belete secretary of the Nationalities Commission of the WPE (civilian)

Tesfaye Dinka deputy prime minister (civilian)

Kassa Gebre minister of construction (civilian)

Tesfaye Wolde Selassie minister of public and state security

The Council of Ministers

During the imperial regime, neither the Council of Ministers nor the prime minister exercised real political power, as the emperor had the final word on all decisions. A similar autocratic pattern has developed under Mengistu, who chairs the Council of Ministers. He is assisted by the deputy chairman Fikre Selassie Wogderes.

The main responsibility of the Council of Ministers is to implement PMAC's decisions and to coordinate the activities of various ministries. Its more recent activities have focused primarily on preparing the national budget and coordinating the social and economic development programs of the PMAC.

When the military assumed power, the prime minister was appointed advisor to the PMAC, and the position has since been vacant. A few of the ministers were retained (all replaced since). The PMAC appointed its own representatives to various ministries to act both as watchdogs and as liaisons. Consequently, the bureaucracy was stifled because inexperienced liaisons overruled the decisions of seasoned bureaucrats. Based on the recommendations of liaisons and employees, several civil servants were fired and others sent to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Cuba for ideological training. Upon their return they started "workers' forums" in which government employees met regularly for socialist indoctrination.

The PMAC introduced changes in the ministries. The creation of the post of permanent secretary in each ministry as the second most

powerful position, next only to the minister, was meant to centralize the decision-making process. The declaration of socialism and the consequent nationalization of rural and urban land and private enterprises also meant the reorganization of a few ministries and the creation of new ones to meet the government's socialist objectives. The government's concern about the economy and especially agriculture was evident from the creation of two new ministries, the Ministry of State Farms and the Ministry of Coffee and Tea Development. The Ministry of National Community Development was disbanded and its responsibilities transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Labor. The old Ministry of Commerce and Industry was replaced by three ministries with responsibilities for industry, domestic trade, and external trade. The latest to be added was the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing.

About half the cabinet were military officers and held the key posts of defense, interior, and public and state security that make up the National Defense and Security Council (NDSC). The NDSC was created in 1983 to supervise all issues related to defense and security. Ministries dealing with economic issues, which were all headed by civilians, come under the National Revolutionary Development Campaign (NRDC), which coordinates the activities of such ministries as Industry, Finance, Agriculture, and State Farms. Both the NDSC and the NRDC are chaired by Mengistu.

Frequent cabinet reshuffling reflected changing PMAC priorities. A major reshuffle, involving eleven cabinet ministers, occurred in April 1983. The primary objective was to address deteriorating economic conditions, especially the severe famine in Gonder, Welo, and Tigray, and the failure of state farms and nationalized companies to increase production. Consequently, all ministries with economic responsibilities were either shifted or replaced. The most recent reshuffle, involving five ministries, took place in March 1987. The ministers for defense, finance, industry, law and justice, and foreign trade were replaced. Between 1983 and 1987, the PMAC has been embarrassed by defections of its senior officials while on tour abroad. These defections have necessitated reshuffles in the Council of Ministers. A further streamlining of the cabinet involved the appointment of deputy prime ministers, of which four have already been announced.

The success of the Council of Ministers in coordinating the activities of the ministries and implementing PMAC decisions was limited because of corruption, lack of direction from above, and interference from mass-based associations. The PMAC created Workers' Control Committees (in all ministries, factories, and at all levels of government) and a special

court to hear cases of corruption and mismanagement. This is yet another layer of bureaucracy, a severe drain on the country's meager resources.

The Judicial System

The PMAC also introduced changes in the judicial system, ostensibly to increase the people's participation in the judicial process but primarily to deal with opponents and critics of the regime. The proclamation that deposed the emperor upheld existing laws as long as they did not contravene subsequent proclamations and orders. The imperial judicial system, consisting of a hierarchy of courts (at *wereda*, *awraja*, and provincial levels; a high court; and a supreme court) was retained. However, several judicial responsibilities were conferred on newly created special military tribunals and people's tribunals, the latter representing urban and peasant associations. The special military tribunals (who are appointed by the chairman) are empowered to hear any civil or criminal cases and may hand down any sentence including the death sentence. Each court has three judges, may deliberate in secret in cases in which state security is involved, and may call any witness and summon testimony from any source. People's tribunals are elected by members of urban and peasant associations according to Proclamations No. 31 and No. 47. Two subsequent proclamations (71 and 104) expanded the duties of the tribunals to hear minor civil and criminal cases and disputes between associations and their members.¹¹ Appeals on the tribunals' decisions may be made to *wereda* and *awraja* courts.

Regional and Urban Administration

Ethiopia is divided into 14 administrative regions (*kifle hager*), 102 subdivisions (*awrajas*), and 583 districts (*weredas*). Early in 1975, the PMAC embarked on reforming regional and local administration. Almost all governors were replaced by younger and better-educated professionals, many with university educations. In order to implement its program of regional administration, the PMAC promulgated a series of proclamations designed to encourage grass-roots involvement in land reform and local government. Proclamation No. 31 of 1975 created peasant associations (PAs), which were given responsibilities for implementing land reform; building schools, roads, and clinics; and arbitration of disputes between members. The proclamation created a hierarchy of peasant associations at the *wereda*, *awraja*, and *kifle hager* levels. The *kifle hager* associations elect delegates to a national body, the All-Ethiopian Peasant Association.

Proclamation No. 71 of 1975 expanded the powers and responsibilities of peasant associations by linking them more closely with the system of regional administration. To that end, they were given authority to organize Revolutionary Administrative and Development Committees

(RADC) at *wereda*, *awraja*, and *kifle hager* levels. Responsibilities of the RADCs, which are made up of government officials and PAs, include tax collection and the creation of militias, women's associations, and agricultural cooperatives. The political objective of the proclamation was to allow for peasants to participate in local and national government; the economic objective was to involve peasants in rural development. In 1983 there existed an estimated 19,543 peasant associations with over 5.1 million members. The performance and success of these associations vary from one locality to another, but in general, reforms in regional government introduced by the PMAC freed peasants from exploitation by unscrupulous landlords. (For more on peasant associations, see Chapter 4.)

The PMAC's most ambitious attempt at decentralization of regional administration was announced in April 1976 in the PNDR. The plan included regional autonomy and envisaged the creation of ethno-linguistic autonomous areas, a plan so far realized for the Afar in Welo and Eritrea. However, the separatist wars in Eritrea and Ogaden have been given as justification to postpone the full implementation of the plan. In March 1983, the PMAC issued Proclamation No. 236 establishing the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities. Its responsibility is to identify the numerous nationalities in Ethiopia, assess their levels of development, and suggest ways to organize regional administrative structures for them. This is designed to appeal to and/or neutralize ethnic separatist groups, but the task is so formidable that it may not be realized in the near future, given the intransigence of both the PMAC and the separatist elements.

In 1975, the PMAC issued a proclamation to nationalize urban rentable houses. In the same proclamation, it instituted a new structure that called for the organization of urban areas into a hierarchy of neighborhood associations called *kebeles*. The *kebeles* are responsible for a wide range of functions including registration of residents, construction of low-cost housing, and provision of health, education, recreational, and other essential services. *Kebeles* are organized into larger associations of urban dwellers, which are in turn organized into central associations. Each larger association elects at least two of its executive council members to serve on the congress of the central association. The central association is expected eventually to take over the administration of the urban center; to that end, it is conferred with duties and powers formerly granted to municipal governments. The central associations are responsible for maintaining streets, bridges, parks; supervising the construction of houses; coordinating development projects; and organizing and supervising the provision of a host of other city services, such as transportation, water, power, fire, ambulance, and garbage pickup. Financing

for the larger and central associations depends on *kebele* contributions (collected from rents) and central government assistance.

The PMAC considers *kebeles* as major organizational units for the implementation of its various policies. The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH), which coordinates the activities of the urban dwellers' associations, is charged with establishing comprehensive urban development plans and ensuring that all development activities of *kebeles* are implemented in accordance with the plan. But the MUDH was starved of funds and personnel and, therefore, lacked the capacity to carry out its numerous responsibilities. For instance, the urban dwellers' associations were not able to meet the rising demand for housing that earlier had been handled by the private sector. The PMAC has made it easier for the middle- and upper-income groups to borrow money from banks to build homes, but no provision has been made to provide low-rent housing for most of the urban population.

NATIONAL UNITY

As discussed in Chapter 2, national unity had been a persistent problem for the Haile Selassie government. When the military assumed power, they abolished the privileged position of the traditional leaders (many of whom previously discouraged ethnic dissent) but failed to introduce the election of a people's government, thus inciting to violence both supporters of the traditional order and those aspiring to a new democratic order. The military government's decision to stay in power strengthened existing separatist movements and unleashed a host of "liberation fronts," which took advantage of the prevailing political instability to extract political and economic concessions from the military government before it consolidated its position.

The PMAC attempted to address the question of nationalities by recognizing the right of self-determination:

The problem of nationalities can be resolved if each nationality is accorded full right to self government. This means that each nationality will have regional autonomy to decide on matters concerning its internal affairs. Within its environs, it has the right to determine the contents of its political, economic and social life, use its own language and elect its own leaders and administrators to head its internal organs. This right of self-government will be implemented in accordance with all democratic procedures and principles.¹²

But the right of self-determination did not include the right to secede. The PMAC's offer fell far short of the objectives of the Somali and Eritrean separatist movements.

Somali and Eritrean Separatism

The Somali government's aspirations of Pan-Somalism had led to border clashes between Somali and Ethiopian troops between 1960 and 1974. Relations between Ethiopia and Somalia worsened after 1974, when a Somali-supported Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF) intensified its military activity in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia. Encouraged by the preoccupation of Ethiopia's troops in Eritrea, Somali government forces began their all-out invasion of the Ogaden in July 1977 and, by October, had brought most of the area under their control. Ethiopia temporarily lost access to ports in Eritrea and Djibouti and had to use the Kenyan port of Mombasa for a few months. The Organization of African Unity's attempt to resolve the dispute failed when the Somali delegation walked out after a special OAU committee refused to recognize the WSLF.

Somali forces were driven out of the Ogaden in March 1978 with the help of Cuban troops and Soviet military aid. Although Ethiopian government forces now control most of the Ogaden, there is continued guerrilla activity by Somali insurgents. Continuing conflict in the Ogaden and drought has forced thousands of ethnic Somalis into refugee camps, creating one of the worst refugee problems in the world. The meeting in Djibouti between PMAC Chairman Mengistu and President Siad Barre of Somalia in January 1986 may eventually help to lower tension between Ethiopia and Somalia and allow the nomadic population and refugees to resume a normal life. Since January 1986, several talks have been held between Ethiopian and Somali officials to normalize relations between the two countries. (For more on Ethiopian-Somali relations, see Chapter 6.)

Eritrean separatism had gained ground against the imperial government since the end of the federation of Ethiopia and Eritrea in 1962. The military government had ordered a cease-fire in Eritrea in 1974 while General Aman M. Andom initiated peace talks with Eritrean leaders. After the general was killed in November 1974, the government stepped up its campaign against the Eritrean separatist guerrillas. There were indiscriminate arrests of Eritreans, both in Eritrea and Addis Ababa, who were allegedly sympathizers of the separatist elements. Faced with such repression and with the death of the general—who many thought had died in their defense—thousands of Eritreans joined the various liberation fronts. By early 1978, Eritrean separatist forces controlled almost all of Eritrea except the city of Asmara and the ports of Massawa and Aseb. But massive military assistance from the Soviet Union and Cuba allowed Ethiopian government troops to force the separatist guerrillas out of many of their strongholds.

In January 1982, the Ethiopian government announced "Operation Red Star," which was described as an economic, political, and military approach to solving the Eritrean conflict. The economic package involved rebuilding industrial plants and transport facilities damaged since 1977 and the construction of farms, schools, and hospitals. It was an attempt to woo popular support away from the Eritrean liberation fronts. The political approach involved Marxist indoctrination of the population and a campaign to establish peasant associations. The military approach, which was considered the final offensive against Eritrean guerrilla forces, involved 100,000 government troops. The three-month campaign, which began in February 1982, ended in a stalemate, with government forces unable to dislodge the guerrillas from their rugged mountain stronghold of Nakfa. The PMAC launched another of its major offensives against the EPLF in the fall of 1985. In a combined land, sea, and air operation, the government forces took Barentu, Tessenei, and the Barka Valley, an important agricultural area, and established control of the Red Sea coastal plain, opening up a strategic supply line for government forces. The PMAC's counteroffensive forced the EPLF to retreat to Nakfa, as it had on several occasions.

Attempts to resolve the Eritrean conflict through negotiation have failed because the Eritrean liberation fronts consider the Eritrean question to be a "colonial problem" and argue that Eritrea should become independent like all other colonies. In May 1976 the military government issued a nine-point policy statement to solve the Eritrean problem.¹³ The proposal offered amnesty to most political prisoners, financial assistance to the province, an end to political and economic differences between Eritrea and the rest of Ethiopia, and an end to the state of emergency in the province. Initially, the ELF, the weaker of the guerrilla forces, showed some interest in the proposal by the PMAC, which occasionally attempted to exploit the hostility among the guerrilla forces,¹⁴ but the fronts that had control over much of Eritrea at the time rejected the plan. The stalemate continued until 1980, when the EPLF proposed a peace plan calling for an internationally monitored referendum giving Eritreans the choice between independence, regional autonomy, or federation with Ethiopia. The PMAC rejected the proposal and stuck to its offer of regional autonomy for Eritrea, proposed in May 1976 in its nine-point peace plan.

Both the PMAC and the EPLF admitted that between 1982 and 1985 they held ten meetings at various European cities. The EPLF held to its 1980 proposition for a referendum. The PMAC continued to offer a form of regional autonomy. Direct talks between the two groups broke down in September 1985 after the government's successful offensive, which enabled the PMAC to seize more territory than it had in any

previous offensive and left the government in its strongest position ever in Eritrea.¹⁵

According to the PMAC, the basis for negotiations to resolve the Eritrean conflict (and other separatist movements) is contained in its Programme of the National Democratic Revolution of 1976. The PNDR proposes self-determination for ethnic groups and the creation of ethno-linguistic autonomous regions. In order to implement this program, in 1983 the PMAC issued Proclamation No. 236, establishing the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities, charged with the task of identifying nationalities and proposing appropriate administrative structures for them. The proposal would perhaps mean the division of Eritrea into four districts, as there are four major ethno-linguistic groups in Eritrea: the Christian, Tigrinya-speakers of south-central Eritrea; the Muslim Tigre of the northwest; the Kunama of the southwest; and the Saho and Afar of the southeast. If the PMAC goes further with the plan of redrawing boundaries on ethno-linguistic bases, it may severely undermine the efficacy of the Eritrean liberation movements, because the plan is designed to appeal to each ethno-linguistic group. The Kunama have always supported the Ethiopian government, and the Afar have come to terms with the PMAC as a result of the creation of an Afar administrative district in the Aseb area in southern Eritrea. According to the plan, the third group, the Tigre-speaking Muslims, would have their own region encompassing an arc of territory in northern Eritrea extending from the Sudan border to the Red Sea coast. In order to appease the Muslims, the PMAC appointed several Muslim leaders as administrators of Keren, Akordat, Massawa, the Sahel region, and as deputy administrator of Eritrea.¹⁶ If the PMAC implements the plan, it could weaken the Eritrean liberation movements and may force them back to the negotiating table.

The Tigray and Oromo Liberation Fronts

The Eritrean and Somali liberation movements have their origins in the European colonization of Africa, but the Tigray and Oromo liberation movements are rebellions against a repressive military government. The Tigray People's Liberation Front traces its origin to the Tigray National Organization (TNO), which was a professional and social welfare organization created in the early 1970s by the Tigrean educated and commercial classes.¹⁷ The usurpation of the popular uprising by the military, the death of General Aman, and indiscriminate arrests of Tigreans suspected of being sympathetic to the Eritrean separatist have caused intensified Tigrean hostility toward the PMAC. The TNO transformed itself into the TPLF in February 1975 and launched an armed struggle against the military government. The TPLF took its

inspiration from the EPLF, from which it received military assistance and with which it shared a leftist ideology.

The TPLF declared its objective to be democratic revolution and national self-determination and believes that national unity should be based on democracy, equality, and mutual benefit.¹⁸ Although its objective is not secession, the TPLF has indicated that it will press for an independent Tigray if the PMAC continues "national oppression." The TPLF has expressed interest in the creation of a united democratic front, consisting of all genuine democratic national and multinational organizations in Ethiopia, to overthrow the military government. To that end, the TPLF has started giving military aid to remnants of former opposition forces against the military government. The TPLF has evolved into an effective guerrilla force sometimes capable of fielding brigade-sized forces against government troops. In 1983, it claimed control of most of Tigray, where it has organized educational and health services, policy designed to win the hearts and minds of the peasants. The TPLF has felt strong enough to extend its operation into parts of Welo and northern Gonder.

The TPLF and EPLF had been coordinating their military operations against government forces and had disrupted the government's supply line to the Eritrean front. One of the objectives of Operation Red Star in 1982 was to prevent cooperation between the TPLF and EPLF. Relations between the TPLF and EPLF have deteriorated since 1983 when the TPLF proposed a political and military union of all opponents of the military regime, including the EPLF. The EPLF was critical of the TPLF's timing and public disclosure of the proposal. The TPLF leaders, on their part, felt slighted that the EPLF failed to inform them before starting secret talks with the Ethiopian government. The conflict between the TPLF and EPLF was so severe that the EPLF did not receive assistance from the TPLF during the government's successful fall 1985 offensive.¹⁹

During 1984–1985, the conflict between the PMAC and the TPLF was played out in the midst of one of the worst human tragedies in Africa, brought on by devastating drought. The conflict made it difficult for both the government and international relief agencies to provide food and medical supplies to drought victims in Tigray, Eritrea, and northern Welo. The TPLF charged that the PMAC was deliberately denying food to Tigreans; the TPLF was thus encouraging Tigreans to cross into Sudan, where they could avail themselves of food and medicine from international relief agencies. The government made no secret of the fact that it was preventing relief supplies from reaching rebel guerrillas rather than drought victims. It embarked on its own program of resettlement of drought victims in southwestern Ethiopia. It is not clear how many families the government will be able to resettle from Tigray,

but a large-scale resettlement probably will drain rural supporters away from the TPLF.

Both the TPLF and EPLF were operating their own famine-relief organizations in areas under their control. The TPLF's Relief Society of Tigray (REST) and the EPLF's Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) were coordinating relief activities with church-related and humanitarian organizations. In September 1985 the Ethiopian government finally gave permission to two private voluntary organizations—Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and World Vision—to expand their famine-relief operations in rebel-held areas of Eritrea and Tigray, respectively. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had the most extensive relief program in Tigray and Eritrea, with several feeding centers. Most of the food to rebel-held areas was supplied through Sudan, but the government's military campaign in 1985 in both Tigray and Eritrea disrupted the relief program, further intensifying the refugee flow. Ethiopian refugees in Sudan, most of whom are from Tigray and Eritrea, were estimated at 484,000 in March 1986.²⁰

The 1960s also saw the rise of Oromo nationalism. When the military overthrew the imperial government in 1974 and embarked on a land reform program, it was welcomed by the Oromo, who had endured the most exploitative system of land tenure. The Oromo demanded reinstitution of their language as a medium of instruction in elementary schools, creation of an Oromo-language newspaper, and election of their own representatives to run peasant associations. The government met these demands with imprisonment and harassment of Oromo leaders. The Oromo Liberation Front came into being when it was realized that the PMAC was consolidating its position to stay in power against the demands of those who were in the vanguard of the revolution. The objectives of the OLF are national self-determination for the Oromo people, liberation from exploitation and oppression, and the realization of a democratic revolution by establishing a People's Democratic Republic of Oromia.²¹ However, in spite of the large number of Oromo that it claims to represent, the OLF has failed to arouse much interest in Oromo separatism, and its sporadic guerrilla activities are confined mostly to small locales in the Harerge and Arsi regions. The OLF claimed in 1985 that it had expanded its guerrilla operations in Welega province near the Sudan border. The region, which is inhabited by non-Oromos such as the Nilotic Anuak and Beni-Shangul peoples, happens to be one of the areas where the PMAC was conducting a resettlement program of famine victims from Welo and Tigray. It will be difficult for the OLF to operate in geographically separated areas of Welega, Harerge, and Arsi.²² Its failure to mobilize the Oromo population may be attributed to poor organization, lack of conviction on the part

of the Oromo about the efficacy of Oromo separatism, and the distribution of the Oromo over wide areas of Ethiopia, which may have minimized the sense of belonging to a single ethnic community.

Among separatist movements that have lost importance are the Afar Liberation Front and the Somali Abo Liberation Front. The Afar, who are also referred to as the Danakil, are mostly nomadic Muslims inhabiting the Rift Valley lowlands of northeast Ethiopia and Djibouti. Many of the Afar in Ethiopia came under their traditional ruler, Sultan Ali Mirah, before the revolution of 1974. Because of the location of the Afar, astride the railway and road connecting Addis Ababa with the ports of Djibouti and Aseb, the sultan had been permitted to exercise a good measure of autonomy during imperial rule. The area had also gained economic importance since early 1960s because of cotton plantations along the Awash River, which had enriched a few Afar families, including Sultan Ali Mirah. When the land reform proclamation was declared in 1975, the sultan, who opposed the land reform program, fled to Saudi Arabia. With help from Somalia and Saudi Arabia, the sultan and his sons organized the Afar Liberation Front. The front disrupted transportation between Addis Ababa and Djibouti and Aseb in 1975–1977, and its guerrillas raided plantations in the lower part of the Awash valley.

In 1977, a leftist splinter group, the Afar National Liberation Movement (ANLM) emerged out of the sultan's conservative group. In its first congress held in Gewane (in Harerge) in 1977, the ANLM demanded the creation of an Afar autonomous region, which the PMAC agreed to grant. In return, the ANLM decided to renounce their secessionist claim. The PMAC has taken important steps in consolidating the Afar areas in Eritrea, Tigray, Welo, and Harerge. In addition to Awsa, the core area of the Afar people, a second Afar area, Aseb, has been carved out of southern Eritrea and made into a separate administrative district.²³ Members of the ANLM have been appointed to administrative positions in both Afar areas. This is the only liberation movement that has so far come to terms with the PMAC. This may be explained by a recognition of mutual interest by both the PMAC and the Afar leadership.

Another liberation movement that dissolved itself was the Somali Abo Liberation Front, which claimed to represent Somalis, Oromos, and Sidamas. It was created by the Somali government in the summer of 1977 on the eve of its invasion of the Ogaden to spread dissension among the Oromo and Sidama. However, by 1981, the Somali Abo Liberation Front had disintegrated after the Oromo and Somali members decided to join the Oromo Liberation Front and the Western Somali Liberation Front.

SUMMARY

What started out as a popular social movement against imperial rule was first subverted into a military government that later degenerated into a one-man dictatorship. Under the chairmanship of Mengistu, the PMAC is nominally organized into three bodies, but of these, only the Standing Committee has any real power. The PMAC is being gradually superseded by the WPE, which was created in September 1984. Led by Secretary General Mengistu, the party is supposed to provide a socioeconomic and political program for the nation and is a prelude to the adoption of a new constitution and the proclamation of a people's republic. The party is organized into a Politburo, a Central Committee, and a Congress, and the membership in all three is dominated by the military.

The PMAC has strengthened its position to deal effectively with opponents and critics of the regime. The bureaucracy, labor, and student groups, which were dominated by opponents of military rule during the early years of the revolution, have been intimidated and forced to submit to the military government. The PMAC has devised special courts and people's tribunals to deal with critics of the regime. The national security apparatus, which was efficient even during imperial rule, has been revamped by East German security and can weed out potential threats to the military government. In addition, in 1985 there were about 2,500 Cuban troops, 1,700 Soviet military advisors, and several hundred East German security personnel in Ethiopia, who can snuff out any opposition to Mengistu, as long as he remains loyal to the Soviet bloc.

Mengistu appears to have the support of the army. Although the armed forces (which were estimated at about 300,000 in 1983) have been indoctrinated with socialist propaganda and enjoy much higher pay compared to prerevolution years, the soldiers have become war-weary from combat duties in Eritrea, Tigray, and the Ogaden. But the possibility of unrest within the armed forces is closely monitored by a commissar in each unit who is responsible for security and socialist indoctrination. Besides, many members of the armed forces have frequently been sent for ideological training to the Eastern bloc to reinforce their support for the revolution.

The rural population is also under tighter PMAC control through peasant associations, which came into being after the land reform proclamation of March 4, 1975, abolished tenancy and nationalized rural land. The land reform program and the involvement of peasants in local self-government has earned the PMAC the support of most of the peasantry, particularly in the south. The urban population is under firm

control of the PMAC through urban neighborhood associations (*kebeles*). The associations are bona fide local governments with their own militias to maintain law and order, apprehend suspected individuals, and hold regular meetings to indoctrinate residents. Unlike the popular land reform program and peasant associations, the urban associations have failed to improve urban life and in many instances have made it worse, thus contributing to alienation of the urban population.

Although the military government of Colonel Mengistu has strengthened its hold on the reins of power, it has yet to address effectively the problem of ethnic separatist movements. In spite of massive military aid from the Soviet Union and Cuba, the prospects for resolving the issue of nationalities militarily are slim. And without a resolution to the question of nationalities, there is little prospect of implementing many of the proposed economic programs, the subject of the next chapter.

NOTES

1. PMAC, Proclamation No. 1 of 1974, *Negarit Gazetta*, September 15, 1974.
2. The ideological debate between EPRP and MEISON is discussed in Marina Ottaway, "Democracy and New Democracy in Ethiopia," *African Studies Review* 21:1 (April 1978), pp. 19–31.
3. University Students Union of Addis Ababa (USUAA), *Struggle* 5 (November 17, 1969). This view appears to be based on the Leninist view of socialism and self-determination for nationalities.
4. Ethiopian Students Association in North America (ESANA), *Challenge* 10 (February 1970), p. 60.
5. Bereket Habte Selassie, *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1980), pp. 92–93.
6. For an analysis of the rivalry among the PMAC leadership, see Yohannis Abate, "The Legacy of Imperial Rule: Military Intervention and the Struggle for Leadership in Ethiopia, 1974–78," *Middle Eastern Studies* 19:1 (January 1983), pp. 28–42.
7. See Bereket Habte Selassie, *Conflict and Intervention in the Horn of Africa*, pp. 36–37.
8. Marina Ottaway and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 142–144; John Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978), pp. 164–166; Pliny the Middle-Aged, "The PMAC: Origins and Structure, Part II," *Northeast African Studies* 5:3 (1983–1984), pp. 5–6.
9. For detailed statement, see PMAC, *Rules of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: PMAC, 1984), chaps. 3 and 4.
10. *Africa Confidential* 25:19 (September 1984), pp. 1–2.
11. The four proclamations that deal with reforms in the judicial process and urban and regional administration are No. 31, Public Ownership of Rural

Lands (1975); No. 47, Government Ownership of Urban Lands and Extra Houses (1975); No. 71, Organization and Consolidation of Peasant Associations (1975); and No. 104, Urban Dwellers' Association Consolidation and Municipalities Proclamation (1976).

12. PMAC, *Programme of the National Democratic Revolution of Ethiopia*, Addis Ababa, 1976, Section II, Article 5.

13. "Nine Point Policy," *Ethiopian Herald*, May 18, 1976.

14. In 1976, a third splinter group, the Eritrean Liberation Front, Popular Liberation Forces (ELF/PLF), appeared in addition to the ELF and EPLF. Failure to unite has resulted in bitter conflict, especially between the EPLF and the ELF. The confrontation in 1980–1981 led to the withdrawal of the battered ELF to the Sudan and its further splitting into two factions: the ELF Revolutionary Council (ELF-RC) and the ELF Revolutionary Committee (ELF-RC). The latest attempt to unite these groups was in January 1985 and involved the three factions of the ELF but was boycotted by the EPLF. The merger agreement, under the auspices of Saudi Arabia, led to the creation of the Eritrean Unified National Council (EUNC). There are serious doubts about the effectiveness of any unification agreement that does not include the EPLF. See *Africa Confidential* 26:6 (March 1985), p. 4.

15. *Washington Post*, December 22, 1985, p. 1.

16. *Africa Confidential* 27:1 (January 1986), pp. 4–5.

17. Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), *Tigray Memorandum Presented to the 38th Session of the United Nations General Assembly*, September 1983, p. 2. Regional/ethnic self-help associations were common in Ethiopia and their purpose was usually to supplement government efforts in building schools, clinics, hospitals, or funding a trunk road to some remote part of their home area. For some ethnic groups such as the Tigray and Oromo, such associations also served as bases for political organizations.

18. "An Interview with TPLF," *Horn of Africa* 4:3 (1981), pp. 33–34.

19. *Africa Confidential* 26:14 (July 1985), pp. 3–4.

20. Population Reference Bureau (PRB), *Population Today* 14:3 (March 1986), p. 4.

21. "Oromia Speaks," *Horn of Africa* 3:3 (1980), pp. 24–25.

22. *Indian Ocean Newsletter*, January 4, 1986, p. 5, and *Africa Confidential* 26:11 (May 1985), p. 8.

23. *Africa Confidential* 22:11 (May 1981), p. 2.

4

The Economic System

Among the factors responsible for the 1974 revolution in Ethiopia were the poor economic conditions of the country. Judged by the UN criteria, Ethiopia—with a 1974 per capita income of \$95; contributions of manufacturing to GDP less than 5 percent; a literacy rate of 10 percent—was among the poorest countries in the world on the eve of the revolution.

By the middle of 1973, many Ethiopians regarded their country's economic situation with gloom and despondency. Their pessimism seemed to be more than justified by the prevailing harsh economic conditions. The economy was unable to generate sufficient job opportunities for high school and university graduates; inflationary pressure caused by food and oil price increases was squeezing the meagre income of workers, making already harsh conditions worse.¹ Between December 1972 and July 1973, the retail price index for Addis Ababa jumped about thirty points, with food, clothing, and household goods leading the way. In the area of agriculture, a series of land reform bills introduced in Parliament to provide security to tenants was rejected by a conservative assembly dominated by members who were major landowners. A drought in Welo and other provinces that resulted in the deaths of 200,000 people, with many more displaced from their areas, was inhumanly ignored. In short, Ethiopia's economic problems seemed sufficient to daunt the most courageous.

In this chapter, we analyze the changes in the economic structure of Ethiopia before and after the revolution, with the objective of placing economic factors in the wider context of the upheaval leading to the 1974 revolution and the transitional problems faced by the *Derg*. Over a decade has passed since the provisional military government assumed power and began to make sweeping political and economic changes. It is time to examine the extent to which the policies and programs of the new government have brought about economic and social development.

ECONOMIC POLICY UNDER HAILE SELASSIE

Although the Italian “civilizing mission” managed to build some roads, establish a few small industries, and introduce commercial farming, particularly in Eritrea, there was very little modern economic structure when Haile Selassie reassumed power on his return from exile in 1941. There were some improvements in communications and education, but the changes were limited. As Richard Pankhurst put it, the “changes, however significant, left vast areas in which traditional life continued more or less as in previous centuries, the influence of the past casting a deep shadow on the whole country.”² With only a very small proportion of the population engaged in the money economy, trade was largely characterized by barter; wage labor was limited; economic units were largely self-sufficient; foreign trade was negligible; and the market for manufactured goods was extremely small.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, much of the economic condition remained unchanged. Development during this period concentrated on the expansion of the bureaucratic structure and other ancillary services. It was necessary for the government to establish major guidelines to transform the economic structure of the country from a subsistence economy to a dynamic, agroindustrial economy; to build a major infrastructure base to exploit resources; to improve the material base that would improve the living conditions of the people; and to provide better services in health, education, communications, and other services. Haile Selassie’s government adopted a mixed economic system to achieve these objectives, and planning, particularly in the later part of his reign, was the major tool for the marshaling of needed resources. From 1957 to 1974 Ethiopia developed a series of five-year development plans. But the plans had minimal impact in transforming the economic structure of the country.

Economic Planning

The first rudimentary attempt at planning in Ethiopia was made in 1957 when the government introduced the First Five Year Development Plan. Subsequently, between 1957 and 1974, three five-year plans were launched. In terms of objectives, the First Five Year Plan (1957–1961) identified the creation of a strong infrastructure base, particularly transport and communications, and the acceleration of agricultural development; the Second Five Year Plan (1962–1967) emphasized an increase in directly productive investment in infrastructure and mining; and the Third Five Year Plan (1968–1973, later extended to 1974) focused on the growth and equitable distribution of national income. The plans included other impressive economic and development goals: the achieve-

ment of an increased GDP, the diversification of production, and the creation of additional employment. To achieve these objectives, \$254.7 million was to be invested over the five-year period of the first plan, \$678.4 million during the time of the second plan, and \$1,366 million during the period of the third plan.³

Many of the plans fell short of realizing the set targets, however, and had very little impact in bringing about developmental changes. For instance, in the Third Five Year Plan period, GDP registered an annual growth rate of 4.1 percent per annum, below the initial target of 6 percent per annum, and per capita income increased by 2 percent against the planned 3.7 percent. Three major reasons may be cited for the ineffectiveness of economic planning in Ethiopia between 1957 and 1974. First, in Ethiopia such planning was actually symbolic, primarily designed to give a reforming face to government. It was not a conscious and continuing effort by the government to effectuate economic and social changes. Indeed, planning as a rational decision-making process designed to set goals and objectives and determine the means by which the set goals and objectives could be achieved did not exist. The planning effort in Ethiopia involved the preparation of a catalogue of projects, a superficial treatment of the economic sectors, and the compilation of a shopping list of requisite foreign funds. The details involved in programming objectives, setting up organizational structures or machinery, and identifying resources (personnel, equipment, and funds) that are normally associated with sound planning were little considered. Second, the bureaucracy viewed planning as a budgetary exercise that they had little authority to implement. Those who were expected to translate the plans into reality were uncertain of its impacts, as a broad-based participation of local government, citizens, and special-interest groups, essential to planning implementation, was unknown.

Third, those who were primarily responsible for the preparation of Ethiopia's development plans failed to comprehend the underlying conditions of the country's underdevelopment. Consequently, needs and priorities were frequently reshuffled; plans were statements of aspirations rather than estimates of what could reasonably be achieved by the economy; and strategies were an exercise in the application of macro-economic policy instruments and models for unjustified growth targets. In a country where peasant farming constituted an indispensable asset for development, few of the development plans promoted as a primary goal, its growth potential or the alleviation of problems associated with it (such as changing the land tenure system). Rural areas were neglected; the plans emphasized urban growth targets; and peasant farming was squeezed out, as mechanization and commercial farming began to assume importance in many areas. Because development programs (such as

building infrastructure and developing manufacturing or commercial agriculture) call for a large injection of capital, foreign aid often had to be considered as a major source of funds to supplement the low level of domestic savings. For instance, in the Second Five Year Plan, foreign funds were to account for 38 percent of the projected financial requirements and in the Third Five Year Plan for 31 percent of the requirements.⁴ Many educated Ethiopians were wary of the implications of the injection of such a large amount of foreign capital into Ethiopia's economy and the concomitant risk of increasing foreign control of the means of production, concerns also warranted later by the *Derg's* policies.

Economic Performance

For an evaluation of the performance of any economy, the conventional starting points are the growth of its gross domestic product and the behavior of its balance of payments. The first is a measure of how capable the economy is of producing goods and services for consumption or export; the second focuses on the balance of trade (exports minus imports) and shows how any deficit in the balance is financed.

Economic measures using GDP have limitations, however.⁵ In the case of Ethiopia, the most important limitation is that a large proportion of Ethiopia's economic activity is carried on within the framework of the traditional sector and hence does not lend itself to easy quantification. Such a situation imposes a major problem in developing reliable and accurate data. This should be kept in mind in the succeeding discussions on production and trade. Despite limitations, a judicious use of available information may shed some light on the long-term trends of economic development in Ethiopia.

The data in Table 4.1 provide evidence of sustained economic growth as measured by GDP between 1960/61 and 1973/74. The average annual growth rate of GDP between 1960 and 1970 was estimated at 4.4 percent, a relatively higher figure than that for some of the neighboring countries—Sudan's growth rate of 1.3 percent or Somalia's growth rate of 1 percent. On the other hand, Kenya's GDP was estimated to have grown at an annual rate of 6 percent and Uganda's at 5.6 percent over the same period.⁶ In contrast to the relatively slow growth rate of GDP, the change in the structure of the economy was somewhat significant. In 1960/61 the agricultural sector accounted for 64.5 percent of GDP, compared with 49.3 percent in 1973/74. During the same period, the share of manufacturing more than doubled (from 1.9 percent in 1960/61 to 4.4 percent in 1973/74) and the share of distribution services, which includes wholesale, retail trade, transport, and communications, jumped from 9.3 to 15.6 percent. The relatively high figure for agriculture

Table 4.1
Gross Domestic Product, 1960/61 - 1973/74 at Constant 1960/61 Factor
Cost (in million dollars)^a

Year	Agriculture		Manufacturing		Distribution Services		Other Sectors		Total	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
1960/61	601.8	64.5	19.6	1.9	87.1	9.3	226.2	24.3	934.7	100
1961/62	612.2	62.9	20.1	2.1	95.5	9.8	245.6	25.2	973.4	100
1962/63	629.1	62.2	22.6	2.2	102.6	10.1	256.9	25.5	1011.2	100
1963/64	643.6	60.7	27.3	2.6	117.4	11.1	272.6	25.6	1060.9	100
1964/65	668.1	58.9	31.9	2.8	136.1	12.0	298.8	26.3	1134.9	100
1965/66	673.8	57.0	37.0	3.1	146.9	12.4	324.5	27.5	1182.2	100
1966/67	695.7	56.2	39.9	3.2	150.4	12.2	351.5	28.4	1237.5	100
1967/68	701.7	54.8	45.1	3.5	167.8	13.1	365.2	28.6	1279.8	100
1968/69	716.6	53.8	50.5	3.8	177.3	13.3	386.5	29.1	1330.9	100
1969/70	733.3	53.2	56.0	4.1	194.6	14.1	393.4	28.6	1377.3	100
1970/71	748.1	52.0	63.3	4.4	209.2	14.5	418.9	29.1	1439.8	100
1971/72	774.7	51.5	65.6	4.3	220.4	14.6	442.8	29.6	1503.8	100
1972/73	780.3	50.0	70.1	4.5	234.2	15.1	467.2	30.1	1551.8	100
1973/74	931.2	49.3	83.2	4.4	294.1	15.6	580.8	30.7	1889.3	100

a Calculated at 1 birr=\$0.40 for the period 1960/61 to 1972/73 and
1 birr=\$0.48 for 1973/74.

Source: Central Statistical Office, National Accounts Estimate,
1960/61-1970/71 and National Revolutionary Development Campaign
and Central Planning Supreme Council.

must be viewed against a background in which 90.5 percent of the population in 1973/74 was classified as rural.

Thus, by the early 1970s the structure of Ethiopia's economy had been changing, and the contributions to GDP by sectors such as manufacturing and trade were on the rise. Such structural changes reflect a trend toward diversification of the economy. Many economists associate diversification with economic progress because diversification protects the economy from international price fluctuations and relieves the country from dependence on only one sector. But the change in the structure of the economy has not been associated with a betterment in the economic standing of various sectors of the Ethiopian society or an improvement in the balance of trade.

Ethiopia's foreign trade was consistently in deficit from 1953 to 1974 with the exception of 1973, when a combination of unusually large receipts from oilseeds and pulses and an unusually small rise in import values resulted in a favorable surplus of \$22 million. The unfavorable trade balance throughout the 1960s and early 1970s forced the country's economy to need rescuing by foreign grants and loans. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Ethiopia's outstanding international debt was increasing at an alarming rate. According to Patrick Gilkes, Ethiopia's debt in 1968 was \$130 million; by 1973 it had jumped to \$237 million, a rise of approximately \$21 million per year.⁷

Exports were dominated by agricultural commodities—mainly coffee, hides and skins, oilseeds, and pulses—most of which were exported to the United States and Western European countries, mainly Italy and West Germany. Coffee was the most important earner of foreign exchange, accounting for 57 percent of total exports in 1970/71. Consumer goods constituted the largest proportion of imports by value, and capital goods averaged 30 percent of the total at the beginning of the 1970s.

A detailed analysis of the economic standing of prerevolutionary Ethiopian society, rural or urban, is not possible because of the lack of accurate and reliable income data. However, a cursory look at the economic conditions of the peasant farmer and the urban wage earner may shed some light on the economic standing of the different classes of Ethiopian society. Until mid-1969, Ethiopia did not have a well-defined strategy for the development of the primarily peasant-based agricultural sector. Most agricultural development was geared toward the development of large-scale, commercial farms. Peasant farming was largely of a subsistence nature with numerous problems. One of the factors stifling the development of peasant agriculture was the archaic land tenure system. Prior to the revolution, Ethiopia is reckoned to have had one of the most complex land tenure systems in the world: In Welo

Province alone it was estimated that there were as many as 111 types of tenure.⁸

Historically, Ethiopia had been divided into the northern highlands, which constituted the core of the old Christian kingdom of Ethiopia, and the southern region, most of which was brought under imperial rule by conquest during the last hundred years. This distinction between north and south is reflected in differences in land tenure.⁹ In the northern provinces—particularly in Gojam, Gonder, Tigray, highland Eritrea, parts of Welo, and northern Shewa—the major form of ownership has been a form of communal system known as the *rist*. According to this system, all descendants (both male and female) of an individual founder are entitled to a share, and individuals have the right to use (usufruct right) a plot of the family land. *Rist* is hereditary, inalienable, and inviolable. No user of any piece of land may sell his or her share outside of the family or mortgage or bequeath his or her share as a gift, as the land belonged not to the individual but to the descendant group.¹⁰

The other major form of tenure was *gult*, ownership right acquired through a formal grant from the monarch or from provincial rulers who were empowered to make such grants. *Gult* owners collected tribute and, until 1966, were entitled to labor service from the peasant. Other forms of tenure worth mentioning include *semon*, *mengist*, and *maderia* land. *Semon* was land whose ownership right was granted to the church in perpetuity. Traditionally, the church had, in principle, claimed no less than one-third of the land in Ethiopia. But actual ownership was believed to be nowhere close to this figure. There are several estimates on church ownership. Dessalegn Rahmato estimates that church holdings were no more than 10 to 12 percent of the cultivated land, and John Cohen and Dov Weintraub give a figure of 20 percent of the cultivated land.¹¹ *Mengist* and *maderia* were large tracts of agricultural land owned by the state. *Mengist* was land registered as government property and *maderia* was land granted mainly to government officials, war veterans, and patriots in lieu of pension or salary. Although *maderia* land was granted for life, the state had a reversionary right over it. According to Cohen and Weintraub, government land comprised about 12 percent of the agricultural land of the country.¹² In general, absentee landlordism in the north was rare, and landless tenants were not numerous. For instance, tenancy in Gonder and Gojam was estimated at about 2 percent of holdings.¹³

In the southern provinces, however, tenancy constituted the major form of tenure. Landownership patterns in the south developed as a result of land measurement and land grants following Ethiopian conquest of the region in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century. After conquest, southern land was divided

equally among the state, the church, and the indigenous population. The state's share was handed over to the warlords who administered the occupied regions. They, in turn, redistributed part of their share to their officers and soldiers. The church's share was distributed among the church hierarchy in the same manner. The rest was divided between the traditional leaders (*balabats*) and the indigenous people. Thus, the loss of two-thirds of the land to the new landlords and the church made many of the local people tenants (*gebbars*). As tenants, they had to pay tribute to the landlords. It is estimated that tenancy in the southern provinces ranged between 65 to 80 percent of the holdings, and payments to the landowner averaged as high as 50 percent of the produce.¹⁴

In the lowland periphery and the Rift Valley region, the traditional practice of transhumance and allocation of pastoral land according to tribal customs remained undisturbed until after World War II. The lowland periphery and the Rift Valley region are inhabited by a number of pastoralists including the Afar and Isa in eastern Eritrea, Welo, and Harer; the Somali in Ogaden; the Borena in Sidamo and Bale; and the Kereyu in the Rift Valley area of Shewa. The pastoral social structure is based on a tightly knit kinship system with strong interclan connections; grazing and water rights regulated by custom. Until the 1950s, this pastoral life remained largely undisturbed by the highlanders, who intensely disliked the hot and humid lowland climate and feared malaria. Since the 1950s, however, the malaria eradication programs made irrigation agriculture in these areas possible. The desire of the government to promote such agriculture, combined with its interest in the new tax revenues that were generated, created pressure on many of the pastoralists, especially the Afar and the Arsi. Major concessionaries, such as the Tendaho Cotton Plantation (managed until the revolution by the British-based firm of Mitchell Cotts) and the Wonji Sugar Plantation (managed by HVA, a Dutch company), acquired large tracts of traditional Afar and Arsi grazing land and converted it into large-scale commercial farms. The loss of grazing land to these concessions significantly affected traditional patterns of migration for grazing and water.¹⁵

Both in the northern and southern parts of Ethiopia, peasant farmers lacked the means to improve production because of fragmentation of holdings, lack of credit, and lack of modern facilities. Particularly in the south, the insecurity of tenure and the exorbitant rents extracted by the landlords killed peasants' incentives to improve production. By the mid-1960s there was a call for land reform by many sectors of Ethiopian society, led by university students who campaigned against the prevailing inequalities of land tenure, the government's reluctance to introduce land reform programs, and the lack of commitment to

integrated rural development. These were major obstacles to agricultural development.

In the 1960s, a further element was added to the situation of the Ethiopian peasant: agricultural mechanization. Although the impact of mechanization on the majority of tenants was limited, in some areas, such as the Awash valley, Chilalo, southern Shewa, northern Sidamo, to mention only a few, the effect was significant. Mechanization led to the proliferation of large, commercial farms in the lowland areas. Between 1958/59 and 1969/70, the number of mechanized farms in Ethiopia rose from 32 to 2,626 and the amount of land mechanically cultivated increased from 6,244 hectares to 481,659 hectares.¹⁶

In 1967, with the help of the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), a new program aimed at helping peasant farmers—the “minimum package program” (MPP)—was inaugurated. The strategy was to provide an integrated list of services to bring about economic and social development. These included credit for the purchase of inputs like fertilizer, improved seeds, and pesticides; innovative extension services; establishment of cooperatives; and the provision of infrastructure, mainly water and all-weather roads. The program, first introduced in the Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU), was later responsible for the establishment of similar projects in Welamo, Ada, and Humera. The concept was so popular that the program was extended nationwide to designated areas known as “demonstration areas.” By 1974, MPP projects were operating in all provinces in the country, run by the Extension and Project Implementation Department (EPID) of the Ministry of Agriculture. International organizations such as the World Bank, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), and USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) began to help in funding many of the projects.

Because of its yield-increasing potential, the program was fully supported by the government. But the extent to which the concept was effective in bringing about social and economic change has been a subject of controversy. Most critics argue that because the land tenure system inhibited peasants from realizing the full impacts of the projects, and because conditions set by the program actually prevented most tenants and small farmers who lacked the necessary finances from participating, the MPPs were mainly production-oriented with limited social and economic benefits.¹⁷ A major element of the program was the credit scheme, but the terms for securing credit were rather hard, particularly for tenants and small farmers. To qualify for credit, a borrower had to supply two guarantors; in addition, tenants had to supply written leases from their landlords. Down payments of 25 percent for fertilizers and 50 percent for seeds were required for a farmer to receive any kind

of credit. The MPPs encouraged mechanized farming but resulted in many evictions.¹⁸ By 1974, despite the continued efforts of the MPPs, the position of most peasant farmers was no better than it had been before the introduction of the program.

By contrast, the position of the urban industrial wage earner was better than that of the peasant farmer. Industrialization in Ethiopia is a post-World War II phenomenon that began to gather momentum with the launching of the five-year development plans. By 1973/74, manufacturing accounted for 4.4 percent of the GDP, and total output exceeded \$327 million. The growth in number of establishments and total employment has been sizable, especially in the late 1960s. Industrial employment increased by 20 percent between 1964/65 and 1973/74, and the number of industries increased by 60 percent. Similarly, the average wage of the industrial worker more than doubled in the decade before the revolution. Real income (income after adjustments for cost of living) of the industrial worker per year increased from \$221 in 1964/65 to \$462 in 1973/74, an average increase of 7.4 percent per annum. But in the last three years preceding the revolution, the increase in wages was not large enough to offset the rise in the cost of living. In fact, real wages declined from \$410 in 1971/72 to \$385 in 1973/74.¹⁹ Furthermore, other sectors of the urban economy did not experience any increase in wages.

Another major problem of the early 1970s, particularly on the eve of the revolution, was inflation. Before 1972, the retail price index increase was moderate. The general index hardly exceeded 1 percent in any year, except in 1970, when a sharp increase in the general price index occurred because of a shortage of food; however, the index dropped again in 1971 as supplies became adequate. But in 1973 the retail price index jumped by 8.9 percent from the previous year, largely owing to a substantial increase in food prices, and in 1974 the retail price index rose by another 8.6 percent, caused by increases in both food and petroleum prices. Food components of the price index at this time rose more than other components such as clothing and household items. Thus, on the eve of the revolution, only a few groups had benefited from the economic improvements. According to Robert Love, "peasant farmers, industrial employees, and members of the Armed Forces all failed to benefit by as much as did other members of the community from the economic growth that took place. Of other groups, perhaps businessmen, traders, and owners of capital benefited most, while the large service sector in Addis Ababa benefited only to the extent it catered for the better-off groups."²⁰

There were, however, isolated advances in education, health, industrial expansion, and the development of an overall infrastructure

during the Haile Selassie period. For instance, in 1952 there were 400 primary schools and 11 secondary schools, and enrollment was limited to 60,000 students. By 1974, the total number of primary schools had increased to 2,754, secondary schools to 503, and enrollment had jumped to over a million students. In higher education, the Haile Selassie I University (now known as Addis Ababa University), which began in 1950 as University College of Addis Ababa, had an enrollment of over 5,000 students by 1974. As had education, health services had expanded considerably from the 1940s, when there had been a few doctors and nurses, most of whom were missionaries. In the mid-1970s about 20 percent of the population had access to health services. Other advances also occurred in transportation and communications. In the mid-1930s, roads extended from Addis Ababa to only a few towns. By 1974, Ethiopia had over 7,000 km. (4,350 mi.) of all-weather roads, and Ethiopian Airlines, which began in 1946, had scheduled flights to forty-three cities and towns.²¹

Nonetheless, on the eve of the revolution Ethiopia was still among the "poorest nations" in the world by UN standards. As Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole described Ethiopia in the late 1960s, the general picture was "one of a very sluggish rate of development [where] isolated advances represent[ed] the facade, not substance, of development."²² More important, in terms of distribution, the achieved "advances" exacerbated existing structural inequalities between urban and rural areas.²³

Government Economic Policy and Foreign Investment

There are three ways in which a government may intervene in a mixed economy such as Ethiopia had before 1974: (1) through the use of monetary and fiscal policy; (2) through direct intervention by legislation or regulations governing market structure and the operation of businesses; and (3) by direct ownership and control of the means of production. The first two measures were widely used during the Haile Selassie period. The government also participated through direct investment in some key industries, such as HVA-Ethiopia, Addis Tyre, Bahir Dar Textiles Plant, and Glass and Bottle Company, to mention only a few. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, policies were promulgated to control industrial and business operations and to stimulate investment.

Between 1950 and 1974, the government enacted several pieces of legislation to encourage both foreign and domestic investment. Proclamation No. 51 of 1963 is unique in that it (1) consolidated other investment policies enacted up to that period, (2) extended benefits to Ethiopian investors, and (3) created a machinery (the Investment Committee) needed to entice foreign investors. The proclamation identified

various incentives in the form of income-tax relief, import and export duty relief, remittance of foreign exchange, and tax exemption of dividends. The Investment Committee—composed of the ministers of agriculture, commerce and industry, and finance; the governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia; and the general secretary of the planning board—was set up with the authority to “recommend” (later amended to “determine”) the measures and benefits granted under the proclamation. In addition to these incentives, the Haile Selassie government guaranteed protection to industrial enterprises by levying tariffs and banning import of those commodities that could adversely affect domestically produced goods. A question worth posing at this juncture is: What was the impact of government policy on foreign investment?

A 1975 study by the National Bank of Ethiopia indicates that private foreign investment increased from \$49 million during the Second Five Year Development Plan (1963–1967) to \$77 million during the Third Five Year Plan (1968–1973).²⁴ In 1971/72 the share of foreign capital in manufacturing industries in Ethiopia amounted to 41 percent of the total paid-up capital. If public enterprises are excluded, the share rises to almost 66 percent of the paid-up capital. In terms of ownership, of the 273 firms surveyed, foreign capital owned 101 firms (37 percent) completely, while another 42 of the firms (15 percent) owned more than 50 percent of the paid-up capital.

Three factors accounted for the increase in foreign capital, particularly in the manufacturing sector. First, in the 1960s Ethiopia was perceived as a country with a continuous and stable government since 1941 and a favorable climate for investment, especially compared to the newly independent African countries. This perception was reinforced by the reassuring and encouraging statements the government issued periodically. A case in point is the following speech by the emperor made on October 12, 1962.

We have never ceased to encourage foreign capitalists to work either in cooperation with our people or to invest their money on development works on their own. It has for long been part of the tradition of Ethiopia to welcome foreigners and to safeguard their rights and interests during their stay here. In the case of those foreigners who especially have invested capital on development projects in this country . . . there has never been a case in Ethiopia's history when the property of a foreigner has been unlawfully confiscated. This is a source of pride for Ethiopia. Ethiopia, will at all times, welcome foreign investors who may be willing to employ their money for development works, either in partnership with Ethiopians or as private entrepreneurs.²⁵

Second, the government adopted a set of policies to encourage foreign investment, partly designed to promote import substitution and industrialization. The policies were simply a package of subsidies effected by government through high tariffs on imported goods, tax exemption, import- and export-duty relief and other similar privileges. Prerevolutionary Ethiopia, John Markakis and Nega Ayle note, had an investment code that was described as "one of Africa's most liberal,"²⁶ and the various legislations inspired the penetration of foreign capital into the country. Third, the relatively low wage rate (an unskilled laborer earned \$.40 to \$.60 per day; a semi-skilled laborer, \$1.20 to \$2; and a skilled laborer, \$4 to \$8) was another major factor that attracted investors.

In spite of the generous investment policy and the favorable political climate, the inflow of foreign capital was not significant. Direct annual foreign investment fluctuated between \$8 million in 1962 to \$12 million in 1972, reaching highs of \$26 million in 1973.²⁷ What is even more interesting is the reinvestment record of foreign enterprises. Between 1966 and 1970, according to Duri Mohammed, less than 20 percent of the total profit was reinvested. For instance, in 1970 remittance amounted to \$12 million, whereas reinvested profit was only \$1.6 million.²⁸ In short, it seems that although high tariffs and other government concessions guaranteed foreign investors a high rate of profit, most of it was repatriated.

ETHIOPIAN SOCIALISM

On September 12, 1974, the Provisional Military Administrative Council assumed power, and on December 20 Ethiopian socialism (*Hibrettesebawinet*) was declared as the guiding philosophy of the state. Ethiopian socialism, according to the PMAC, means ". . . equality; self-reliance; the dignity of labor; the supremacy of the common good; and the indivisibility of Ethiopian Unity."²⁹ To achieve the objective of Ethiopian socialism, the banner of *Ethiopia Tikdem* (Ethiopia First) was adopted. The basic principle of *Ethiopia Tikdem* is that the common good is paramount over individual, corporate, ethnic, or regional interest. By 1976, the *Derg* was embracing a political philosophy with a distinct Marxist-Leninist tone. According to the economic policy of Ethiopian socialism,

. . . those resources that are either crucial for economic development or are of such a character that they provide an indispensable service to the community will have to be brought under government control or ownership. Essential economic activities which are not amenable to centralized public management will, though outside the public sector, be

subject to public monitoring to ensure that the public interest is properly served. Activities in the private sector which are not harmful to the interest of society will be left in private hands in so far as they do not impede the objectives of "*Ethiopia Tikdem*."³⁰

The *Declaration of the Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia* further elaborated on some of the new changes to follow: Land tenure and agricultural policy were to be radically changed; industrial activity, the exploitation of natural resources, and the development of small-scale enterprises were to be encouraged; foreign capital and know-how were to be given the opportunity to participate in national development; and labor policies were to be modified—all changes to be implemented in accordance with the principle of *Ethiopia Tikdem*.

The declaration was followed by a wave of nationalization. On January 1, 1975, all banks, financial organizations, and thirteen insurance companies were nationalized. This was followed on February 3 by the nationalization of seventy-two of Ethiopia's largest companies; the government also acquired majority interests in twenty-nine others. "Fair compensation" was promised in all cases. The move sent shock waves through the business community in Ethiopia. It left many businesses in so much disarray and confusion that the *Derg* found it necessary to elaborate on its economic and investment policies. On February 7 a detailed explanation of the economic policy of Ethiopian socialism was issued. "The major and immediate goal of Ethiopian socialism . . . ," the document stated, is "the elimination of poverty through the development of productive forces and the consequent expansion of production, and the prevention of exploitation of the Ethiopian society."³¹ The areas in which private and public capital could participate were delineated as follows:

- A. Activities exclusively reserved for the state: mining of precious and radioactive minerals; basic industries; large-scale salt mining; petroleum refining; textiles; leather (including leather products) and rubber products; fertilizer; drugs; tobacco; glass and bottles; electricity, gas, and water; air and sea transport; the mass media and telecommunications.
- B. Activities where the state and private capital could cooperate jointly: petroleum exploration; mining of coal, ferrous and nonferrous metals, potash, phosphate, sulphur; export-oriented processing and canning of foodstuffs such as meat, fruits, and vegetables; paper and pulp industries; plastic and other synthetic materials; large-scale construction; and tourism.

- C. Activities which are left to the private sector: other activities not listed above, some of which include food processing and marketing; dairying; baking; trade; surface and in-land water transport; entertainment services; other activities including operation of hotels, bars, restaurants, tea shops, and groceries.

In December 1975 the government issued Proclamation No. 76 to regulate private investment. The purpose of the new policy was to limit the type and extent of private capital in the state economy. The new investment proclamation empowered the minister of commerce and industry to issue new licenses to "individual enterprise" based on amount of capital invested. The minister could allow a private entrepreneur to invest up to a maximum of \$96,000 for retail establishments, a maximum of \$144,000 for wholesale establishments, and a maximum of \$240,000 for an industry. The proclamation prohibited the pulling together of capital, whether in the form of partnership or company; it limited the number of licenses to one per individual; and it excluded individuals with a permanent job or any other source of income from receiving licenses.

In January 1983 the government issued Proclamation No. 235 to attract foreign investment in a joint venture with Ethiopian public capital. The proclamation encouraged the participation of foreign investment (private or public) in several activities believed to contribute to economic and social development. It limited foreign shareholding to a maximum of 49 percent of the shares but provided incentives such as income-tax relief, import and export duty relief, remittance of foreign exchange, and tax exemption on dividends.

Whether the first thirteen years of military rule in Ethiopia are labeled a "revolution" spearheaded by mass movement or a simple "military dictatorship" run by few privileged officers, the fact remains that the reform programs of the *Derg* have profoundly altered Ethiopian society. Although Ethiopia still faces severe economic difficulties, major changes have been introduced by the PMAC. These changes may be examined by assessing PMAC's economic policies and their impacts on rural and urban areas.

PROGRAMS OF THE *DERG*: THE RURAL ECONOMY

Three major programs affect the rural economy: (1) land reform and its implementation, (2) peasant associations, and (3) food production and marketing policy.

Land Reform

Land reform, long overdue in Ethiopia, must be regarded as the most important of the *Derg's* economic programs. Among the many groups that were active during the early days of the revolution (the military, students, and labor), there was a consensus on the need for land reform; it was the nature of reform that was a subject of controversy and discussion. The prevailing notion among agricultural experts, key government officials and international agencies was that Ethiopia should implement a land reform that would limit the size of holdings and regulate landlord-tenant relationships. There were, however, radical groups, led by Moges Woldemichael, the chairman of the economic committee of the *Derg*, that were opposed to any "moderate" reform. These radical groups argued that moderate reforms would require massive resources to undertake, involving measurement, control, and redistribution. Landowners could easily evade the regulations through loopholes in the law or through judicial measures in the implementation process. Finally, on March 4, 1975, the *Derg* announced its land reform program: All rural land was nationalized without any compensation; tenancy was abolished; the hiring of wage labor on private farms was forbidden; all commercial farms were to remain under state control; and the peasantry was to have "possessing rights" to a plot of land not exceeding 10 ha. (25 acres).

The land reform was considered basic to agricultural development and essential to improve the standard of living of the peasant. To implement the reform, peasant associations were to be established and over 60,000 senior secondary school and university students, initially sent to rural areas under the *zemecha* program, were directed to mobilize and organize the peasantry. The students were responsible for organizing many of the peasant associations. In the process of organizing, the students tried to introduce changes that were even more radical than those called for by the land reform proclamation: They excluded former officials and landlords from holding any office, favored tenants, redistributed plow oxen, attempted to establish collective farms, and tried to arm the peasants.

The reform was welcome in the southern part of Ethiopia, where tenancy on the average was as high as 55 percent and rural elites played an exploitative role. But in the northern provinces, where communal ownership (*rist*) dominated and large holdings and tenancy were the exceptions, there was some resistance to the land reform. Despite the special provision for communal areas (Article 19 of the proclamation gave peasants in the communal areas possessory rights over the land they were presently tilling) and the concerted effort of the PMAC

representatives to reassure farmers that land reform would not affect them negatively, northerners (who had a history of opposition to land measurement and/or reform) were suspicious of the intentions of the new government. The reform held no promise of gain for a majority of the northerners; rather it was perceived as an attack on their basic rights on *rist* land, to which the northern peasant was deeply attached. The resistance intensified when *zemecha* participants began to campaign for collectivization of land and oxen.³²

The reform had perhaps the least impact on the lowland peripheries, where nomads traditionally maintained their claims over grazing lands. The new proclamation gave them possessory rights over land they used for grazing and, therefore, the nomads did not perceive the new legislation as a threat. However, in the lower Awash valley around the Afar territory, where large-scale, commercial estates had thrived, there was significant opposition led mainly by tribal leaders including Ali Mirah, the sultan of Awsa.

In general, students had very little success in organizing the peasants in the north, and in some areas their revolutionary message was badly received because the students tried to introduce changes that were in conflict with local interests. But in the south, students were able to mobilize peasants and turn them against the landlords. Many absentee landlords were afraid to visit their land; others fled to the towns as peasants began to take over the farms.

The land reform had some important impacts. First, the reform effectively destroyed the feudal order and with it the imperial system whose power base was intimately tied to the powers of the big landowners. Second, landownership patterns, particularly in the south, were altered permanently in favor of the peasants and small landowners. As peasants began to acquire new status, the balance of aspirations and opportunities that landowners had monopolized began to reverse. Third, the reform opened the way for peasants' participation in local matters by granting peasants the right to form associations and implement the land redistribution task themselves.

It must be noted, however, that land reform in Ethiopia was primarily a political rather than an economic gesture. At best, one can only say that land reform provided the necessary, but not the sufficient, conditions for agricultural development. Considering the mode and speed in which the reform was designed and implemented, it was obvious that the reform was preempted by political expediency whose primary objective was to destroy the feudal order rather than to promote agricultural development. Of no less significance was the *Derg's* determination to win the support of radical groups who were agitating for land reform. Consequently, despite the land reform, problems associated

with declining agricultural productivity and poor farming techniques are still prevalent. Keith Griffin and Roger Hay maintain that about 29 percent of rural households did not own oxen for plowing. Dessalegn Rahmato, in his study of four communities in different parts of Ethiopia, found that as many as 50 percent of the peasants in some areas did not have oxen and as many as 40 percent did not have plows. Thus, it was difficult to expect any increase in agricultural productivity from "peasants without the 'tools of their trade.'" ³³ Officials of the present government are painfully realizing that productivity cannot be increased by mere redistribution of land. Rather, what the nation needs is an agrarian reform—land reform supplemented by the provision of a package of agricultural services (fertilizers, credit, water control schemes, high-yield seeds, and so forth) and careful management of resources with sound and stable institutional backing.

Peasant Associations

The power to create peasant associations (PAs) was granted under Articles 8 and 10 of the land reform proclamation. PAs were to be organized on 800-ha. (2,000-acre) areas, and membership was to be made up of tenants, landless laborers, and landowners with less than 10 ha. (25 acres). Former landowners who were willing to cultivate their holdings were allowed to join only after the land distribution was completed. The functions of the associations are numerous, ranging from redistribution of land to undertaking development programs. In many areas the PAs replaced the local administrative machinery that crumbled with the advent of the revolution. Peasants were provided with an organizational framework that gave them power to implement programs. But the relationship between the administrative structure set up under the Ministry of Interior (local *wereda* and *awraja* administration) and the PAs was not clearly defined. Consequently, the dual structure created massive confusion in terms of control and responsibility. The reason for the dual policy is that the government maintains central control through the *wereda* and *awraja* administrative structure and at the same time uses peasant associations to implement its rural development policies.

Another important element relates to the commitment of the military in the success of the PAs. The *Derg* granted PAs broad functions and responsibilities, but the resources needed to exercise the power effectively were missing. The PAs are primarily mass organizations outside the government administrative apparatus, and they have not been integrated into the national policymaking system. As Alula Abate notes, the goal seems to utilize the PAs as transitional institutions in the long-term rural transformation envisaged by the government. ³⁴ Thus, it was obvious

from the outset that the land reform proclamation was vague in its organization of the PAs.

Peasant associations started to form immediately after the declaration of the land reform program. By December 1975, there were 18,000 PAs and 4.5 million members. The number increased to 19,543 associations with some 5.1 million members by 1981/82.³⁵ The PAs have demonstrated an amazing degree of initiative and success in organizing forestry programs, local service and production cooperatives, small-scale handicraft industries, road construction, and a number of other local development programs such as schools and clinics. Despite the ambiguities concerning their creation, the PAs became vital in providing an institutional basis for rural development and self-help activities. Proclamation No. 71 of December 1975 gave legal personality to PAs and expanded their duties and responsibilities to include security, tax collection, adjudication, and political agitation.

By 1976, although the level of peasant participation varied from region to region, the PAs were beginning to influence food markets. The peasantry, with no incentives to bring their produce to urban markets, increased their own consumption. They also withheld grain from the market to drive up prices because the price-control measures of the *Derg* created severe shortages of major items that the peasantry needed most—sugar, coffee, cooking oil, salt, and other products. Urban areas began to face severe shortages of food items such as teff, wheat, maize, and other grains. The matter was so serious that Mengistu lashed out at the “individualism and petty-bourgeois tendencies of the peasantry” and their “capitalist mentality” during the fourth anniversary of military rule in September 1978. Thus, despite the nationalization of land and the various reform programs, the PMAC did not succeed in halting individualism and the motivation of personal gain.

In 1977 the PAs were organized into the All-Ethiopia Peasant Association (AEPA). AEPA is the umbrella organization that maintains the link between the central government and the PAs at the local level. It was pointed out at the 1982 AEPA congress that PA leaders have faced numerous problems, such as lack of contact between higher-level PA officers and local farmers, lack of administrative channels for contacting the government, shortage of skill- and management-training programs for officers, and absence of representation of women in PAs.

In an effort to increase agricultural production and control its distribution, the PMAC promoted the creation of service and producers' cooperatives and collectivization. In June 1979 the PMAC issued its Guidelines on Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives. Collectivization would bypass the thorny issue of redistribution of land to equalize size

and quality of holdings that the government was not willing to face. After the 1975 proclamation, some peasants were allowed to keep up to 10 ha. (25 acres) of the land they were farming, whereas others received land after they became members of peasant associations. This meant that those farmers with better-quality land were allowed to keep what they had whereas those with poor-quality or marginal land were left with poor farms. This situation has led to considerable discontent among poor farmers, who would have preferred a second-stage redistribution in order to equalize the size and quality of holdings. But a second-stage redistribution would have created a lot of strife among peasants and their associations.³⁶ Collectivization was a convenient way out of this dilemma.

The development of the producers' cooperatives was to be in three stages. The first stage was to be the *malba*, an elementary type of cooperative which would allow peasants up to 2,000 sq. m. (2,392 sq. yd.) of land for private use; draft animals and implements would be shared. The second stage was the *welba*, in which plots for private use were to be reduced to 1,000 sq. m. (1,196 sq. yd.); draft animals and implements would be collectively owned. In the final stage, the *weland*, private use of land would be abolished and advanced forms of cooperatives (communes) established. The government would provide preferential treatment to registered producers' cooperatives in the supply of credits, fertilizers, and other benefits. The response from the farmers was less than enthusiastic. There were incidents of opposition in Sidamo, Gonder, and Gojam because farmers viewed the move to form cooperatives as a prelude to the destruction of their "family farms." By 1981/82, there were only fifty-seven registered producers' cooperatives, and the effort to establish more cooperatives seemed an uphill fight.

In 1985 the government initiated a new relocation program known as "villagization." The program is aimed at grouping together scattered small farming communities throughout the country into small village clusters where water, health, and school services could be made available. The program has already begun in places such as Harerge, Shewa, and Gemu Gofa, where over a million people have been moved. It is estimated that over 30 million people will eventually be affected by this program. Although some critics oppose the program, many question the manner in which it is being implemented. Farmers are reported to hate the plan, and the Ministry of Agriculture recommended that it be postponed until after the 1986 harvest.³⁷ However, the villagization program has now been resumed, and farmers are being moved around in different parts of the country.

Food Production and Marketing Policy

One of the important controversies surrounding the revolution is the effect of the PMAC's sweeping land reform and other revolutionary programs on agricultural production. Thirteen years after the revolution no comprehensive assessment of the impact of land reform on food production had yet been presented. The few available studies seem to draw conflicting conclusions primarily because the analyses seem to be based on unreliable data.³⁸ It must be admitted that the overall economic impact of land reform is difficult to assess. A sound evaluation would require study over a rather long time span, but as time passes new variables can complicate the analysis. Probably the most important new variables are the persistent drought and local unrest that have affected Ethiopia since 1974.

The PMAC's land reform program thus far has had mixed results. For a majority of the peasants in the south, the reform brought significant economic and political gains. As new landowners, the peasants' primary concern is how to increase their productivity and improve their level of living. The new legislation requiring formation of producers' cooperatives and the various demands for PAs to participate in "revolutionary calls" have received lukewarm support. In the north, where tenancy was not a major problem, the reform brought no significant gains. Most of the peasants are opposed to the formation of producers' cooperatives and PA exhortations to participate in "revolutionary calls" are often resented. The concept of the family farm is still central to northern peasants' views of social and economic well-being.

In terms of food production, the available data on crop production suggest that land reform and collectivization measures have had minimal impact in increasing food supply. Table 4.2 indicates that crop production increased by 21.4 percent in 1975/76, the first year following the land reform, but showed a 4.2 percent decline in 1976/77 and another 9.5 percent decline in 1977/78. It is difficult to examine trends after 1979/80 because the available data include other cash crops not included in previous years. However, the government's evaluation shows that agricultural production has been on the decline. In a speech to the second annual COPWE, Mengistu indicated that agricultural production grew only 2.4 and 2 percent in 1980 and 1981 respectively. Mengistu expressed his grave concern about the declining growth rate of agricultural production and the fact that the growth rate was below the population growth rate of 2.9 percent. Again, as Table 4.2 indicates, crop production in 1980-1982 showed a decline. Thus, assuming that the government reports and estimates are valid, the level of crop production by 1981/82 was below that needed to feed the population.³⁹

Table 4.2
Estimated Production of Major Crops (in thousands of metric tons)

Year	Cereals (1)	Pulses (2)	Others (3)	Total	% Total Change
1974/75	3799.7	499.5	58.1	4357.3	-
1975/76	4698.1	462.0	130.0	5290.1	21.4
1976/77	4370.1	624.5	72.4	5067.0	-4.2
1977/78	3985.4	515.1	86.1	4586.6	-9.5
1978/79	4080.5	470.1	79.9	4630.4 ^a	1.0
1979/80	6367.6	933.7	165.5	7466.8 ^a	-
1980/81	5611.9	816.7	133.1	6561.7 ^a	-12.0
1981/82	5328.6	801.1	107.7	6237.3	-4.9

a Figures include other crops such as pepper, fenugreek, etc., which were not included in previous years figures.

Col. 1: Includes teff, barley, maize, wheat, sorghum, millet, and oats.

Col. 2: Includes horsebeans, chickpeas, haricot beans, field peas, lentils, and soybeans.

Col. 3: Includes oilseeds such as flax, neug, and vetch.

Source: Central Statistical Office, Addis Ababa. See also IBRD, Ethiopia: Recent Economic Developments and Future Prospects, vol. II, Report no. 4683-ET, December 1983, Table 7.1.

Indeed, it is not surprising that by 1982, Ethiopia, which was virtually self-sufficient in food production in the early 1970s, became a net importer of over \$65 million worth of food. The shortages was particularly serious in the staple crops—teff, wheat, barley, and pulses. The 1978/79 figure seems to show a slight reversal of the trend. But this slight increase, when viewed against Ethiopia's annual population growth rate of 2.9 percent, confirms that the food supply situation has reached a crisis stage. Production of coffee, the major export crop, fell from 193,000 tons in 1976/77 to 188,000 tons in 1978/79. Since 1979 coffee output has shown a modest increase. Production rose from 194,000 in 1979/80 to 202,000 in 1980/81 and remained at the same level in 1981/82.

The food production shortfall was exacerbated by a number of factors including adverse weather, lack of transport, increase in on-farm consumption by peasants, hoarding by intermediate traders in anticipation of higher prices, and government price controls, which forced peasants to withhold their products. To alleviate the serious food shortage, particularly in urban areas, the *Derg* has resorted to a rationing system

through the urban dwellers' associations (*kebeles*) and peasant associations. But because the government's policy aims at socializing the domestic trade network, the shortage of food products and other imported items continues.

Marketing of agricultural output is done by private traders and the Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC), established in 1976. The AMC is a government agency whose objective is to influence the supply and price of crops. It purchases grain directly from PAs at fixed ex-farm (village-level) prices. AMC sets quotas of grain purchases to be delivered by PAs and cooperatives and also buys directly from private wholesalers, who are required to sell half of their purchase at predetermined prices. State farms sell their output directly to AMC. Although AMC has agents in all provinces, it is particularly active in major cereal-producing regions—namely, Gojam, Shewa, Arsi, and Gonder. In 1981/82, out of AMC's purchase of 257,000 t. (282,700 tn.) of grain, Gojam accounted for 32 percent of the purchase and Arsi, Shewa, and Gonder accounted for 23, 22, and 10 percent respectively.⁴⁰ The government's price controls and AMC's operations have led to the development of different price systems at various levels. For instance, the 1984/85 official procurement price for a quintal (100 kg., or 220.5 lb.) of teff (white) was \$20 at ex-farm level and \$29 when AMC purchased it from wholesalers. But the same quintal of teff retailed at \$39 at *kebele* food stores in Addis Ababa and sold for as much as \$87 at open market prices.⁴¹ Such wide differences in the pricing system have created shortages of food crops because farmers as well as private merchants withhold crops to sell on the black market at higher prices.

The most serious factor affecting agricultural production is the drought that has persisted since 1972. As of early 1985, over 300,000 people have died and about 8 million people were seriously threatened by the drought, which has affected most of northern Ethiopia. Food need estimates for 1986 were put at 1.3 to 1.5 million t. (1.43 to 1.65 tn.). As a result of the widespread publicity, relief aid poured in from all over the world. By the end of 1985, the United States had given about 440,000 t. (484,000 tn.) of food; the European Economic Community (EEC), 198,000 t. (217,000 tn.) of food; Canada, 167,000 t. (183,700 tn.) of food; and the Soviet Union, 10,000 t. (11,000 tn.) of rice.⁴² Other assistance included transport facilities, medical supplies, and money. For instance, although the Soviet Union pledged no food aid in 1985, it contributed about \$260 million in nonfood aid. According to the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), pledges of food for 1986 included: (United States, 300,000 t. (330,000 tn.); EEC, 125,000 t. (137,000 tn.); Canada, 90,000 t. (99,000 tn.); and Australia, 17,000 t. (18,700 tn.).⁴³ Although the relief effort will help in saving lives, long-term

solutions to the drought and food distribution are still being debated. Controversy surrounding the government's handling of the recent famine and suggested solutions have irritated both the PMAC and donor countries, particularly those from the West.

Three major areas concerning the controversy are worth considering. First, the Ethiopian government's agricultural development policy gives priority to state farms which have been consistently failing in spite of heavy government subsidies.⁴⁴ Although the state farms in 1984 accounted for less than 10 percent of food production, it was estimated that they received between 70 and 90 percent of agricultural investment.⁴⁵ Some of the state farms' produce was marked for export to enhance the foreign exchange earnings of the government. By contrast, peasant farms have faced interference from government bureaucrats pressuring them to collectivize and to sell their produce to cooperatives at fixed prices. Some farmers fear that their land might be redistributed to other peasants or cooperatives. Such measures kill any incentives peasant farmers might have for making major improvements on their land.

Second, the government's long-term solution to the drought problem is to move about 1.5 million people from the affected northern regions to the south and southwest where arable land is plentiful. A settlement program of such magnitude requires massive investment in infrastructure and logistics. Western governments who are expected to help with this program are apprehensive of the intentions of the government. Some, including the U.S. government, believe that the resettlement program is "unrealistic." Others argue that the plan is a ploy by the military government to depopulate the northern areas, where the government is facing resistance and secessionist movements, particularly in Eritrea and Tigray. The resettlement would reduce the support base of the guerrillas and thereby weaken them. Another argument surrounding the resettlement program relates to the long-term government policy for peasant farms. If the long-term objective of the government is to collectivize farms in Ethiopia (the ten-year development plan has set as its target the collectivization of 50 percent of the farms by 1994), Western countries do not want to be part of a plan in which the resettlement program is used to recruit labor for Soviet-style collectives and state farms.⁴⁶ Thus, the resettlement program has become controversial. It has been charged that farmers were being moved "at gunpoint," families separated, and thousands dying from malaria and sleeping sickness in resettlement centers.⁴⁷ The program has been temporarily halted, but so far some 600,000 people have been resettled.

Third, Western governments question the sincerity of the PMAC. They have charged that the PMAC's first priority is to build its military power to wipe out rebels. During the summer of 1984, the PMAC

concentrated its efforts on preparations to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the revolution. The government is believed to have spent between \$50 million and \$100 million on the celebration.⁴⁸ Indeed, some argue that "the government could not have prevented the famine, but it should have remembered that charity begins at home." Critics cite the government's reluctance before the celebration to allow Western journalists to visit drought-stricken areas as an indicator of its lack of commitment. The PMAC's response to such indictments has been that its repeated appeals for aid, including appeals before the UN Security Council, had fallen on deaf ears and that Ethiopia had become "forgotten by a world glutted with a surplus of grain."⁴⁹

There is enough blame to go around—that includes the Ethiopian government, international organizations, the news media, and the world community—regarding the recent plight of thousands of Ethiopians. Perhaps the overwhelming factor was politics: Ethiopia's political alignment changed after the 1974 revolution, and the West felt that Ethiopia should look toward its allies in the Soviet bloc for any major assistance.⁵⁰ The Soviet bloc has not been generous with economic aid. International organizations, including some UN agencies, and the news media were accused of being part of "a conspiracy of silence" for not having spoken out against the Ethiopian government's handling of the famine, particularly its policy of withholding food from rebel areas. There was a strong feeling, particularly among Western nations, that the blame rested on the military government, which (1) ignored impending famine warnings as early as 1982 and concentrated its resources on military buildup, spending to that end as much as 46 percent of Ethiopia's GNP;⁵¹ (2) destroyed the incentives of private farmers while spending millions to build Soviet-style state farms; and (3) covered up the magnitude of the famine by refusing to allow Western news media to visit the drought areas until the tenth anniversary of the revolution had been celebrated. Until more reliable information is available on the circumstances, particularly what human negligence was involved, it is difficult at this time to place blame or hold any one group responsible for Ethiopia's tragedy.

PROGRAMS OF THE DERG: THE URBAN ECONOMY

In contrast to the rural areas, where land reform has redistributed social and economic power to favor of the peasants, especially in the south, the reform programs in the urban areas have remained far short of meeting the expectations of the urban community. Glen Bailey identifies three major reasons why urban reforms have failed: (1) the failure of the PMAC to generate economic growth in the urban areas, (2) the

substantial reduction in urban living standards due to the reversal of urban/rural terms of trade, and (3) the unwillingness of the PMAC to share power with civilian groups.⁵² Following the revolution, expectations soared among many classes. The urban petite bourgeoisie hoped to gain control of nationalized enterprises and receive other advantages; labor anticipated wage increases and job security; the radical intelligentsia and students perceived the progressive tendencies of the *Derg* as a move to replace the old by a new, progressive, and democratic system; and the small traders and businesspeople believed that an end to foreign domination of business activities would allow them to expand. By the middle of 1976, the initial optimism and support had withered away, and much of Ethiopia was engulfed by turmoil and strife.

It must be noted that the urban community had the most to lose from such reforms as the nationalization of industrial and commercial enterprises, the expropriation of urban land and extra houses, and the freeze on salaries and wages. Furthermore, severe shortages in housing, food supply, and imported items; the soaring inflation; and the continuing unemployment had affected the urban areas the most. During the bloody "red terror" era (when urban terrorism engulfed Ethiopia between November 1977 and May 1978), it was the urban community that was hit the hardest, and many still hold the military partially responsible. When opposition groups challenged its policies and authority, the *Derg* reacted violently and repressively. These problems have resulted in the alienation of the urban population and the erosion of support for the PMAC. In this section, we examine the impact of the urban reform programs of the *Derg*, especially on the industrial and commercial sectors and on urban land and housing.

Industrial and Commercial Sectors

Under the Haile Selassie regime, industrialization in Ethiopia was plagued by many structural and institutional factors. Some of these factors were related to the emphasis on light industries, to excessive concentration of industry in small geographic areas, to minimal linkage among the different sectors, and to capital intensiveness. Potential investors had to deal with more than half a dozen agencies directly involved in industrial development. The effect was to stifle industrial growth.⁵³

The nationalization program of the *Derg*, although not a solution to many of these institutional and structural problems, made a significant shift in the ownership pattern of resources. The initial measure involving the financial sector led to the nationalization of banks and insurance companies. This was followed by complete ownership of seventy-two firms and majority control of another twenty-nine companies. Subsequent

measures included government control of the import and export sector, nationalization of supermarkets, department stores, large distribution centers and the creation of the Ethiopian Distribution Corporation. The *Derg* has created a heterogeneous state sector composed of a collection of industrial, financial, and commercial enterprises.

Underlying the *Derg's* approach to development is a strong belief that the state should play a larger role in industrialization and commercial development and exercise tighter supervision of private investment and activities of local small businesses and distributing agents. These measures have been supplemented by price controls to hold down the cost of living for urban areas and the promotion of a rationing system through urban *kebele* associations. Although the PMAC has become intent on exercising full control of those sectors that it perceives as strategic economic activities, it has permitted private investment, local as well as foreign, in activities reserved for the private sector. Private investment is supposed to augment state investment, not replace it. But the rhetoric of the revolution created a climate of uncertainty in the business community that has discouraged both domestic and foreign investment in the economy. Apprehensive of the policies of the PMAC, the private sector does not fully comprehend its role in a socialist economy. Individual business operators exhibit a high level of uncertainty about their future. At present, a large part of the potential for private savings does not lead to investment but rather feeds increased consumption, if not some level of capital flight. Thus, in 1977/78 the state's share of new capital expenditure in manufacturing was 96 percent, whereas private new capital expenditure was limited to only 4 percent. According to the National Bank of Ethiopia, private, long-term investment declined from \$31.2 million in 1974 to \$5.8 million in 1977, and there has been no investment since. In the long run, the PMAC expects primary products (especially coffee, hides and skins, and pulses) to finance state investment in industry. But in the short run, the government has to turn to international credit and foreign donors.

The performance of the industrial sector in the wake of nationalization has been poor. There has been an overall decline in the manufacturing sector, except for the year 1978/79. Gross value of production and value added stagnated while fixed assets and new capital expenditure showed a 16.5 and 31.4 percent decline respectively during the period 1973/74 to 1977/78.⁵⁴ In 1978/79, as a result of the Development Through Cooperation Campaign (*zemecha*), there was a slight reversal of the trend, with new capital expenditure rising to a record high of \$30 million. But the economy was not able to sustain this growth, and between 1978/79 and 1980/81 new capital expenditure declined again by another 9.5 percent. Although there was an overall

increase in industrial production by public enterprises during 1978–1982, the increase varied from 13.6 percent during 1978/79–1979/80 to only 5.1 percent during 1980/81–1981/82.⁵⁵ The declining rate was related to capacity constraint caused by the low level of investment for expansion.

A multitude of factors have contributed to the poor performance of the industrial sector, including the shortage of spare parts; the lack of skilled managerial and technical expertise (aggravated by the flight abroad of many foreigners and Ethiopians); the unavailability of transportation facilities, as trucks began to be requisitioned for military purposes; and, most of all, economic disruption resulting from the war in Ogaden and in Eritrea where almost 30 percent of the industries in the country are located and which experienced virtual shutdown in 1975–1978 because of the war), and from internal strife. Equally important was the disruption by labor, which opposed *Derg* policies of banning strikes, demonstrations, or any form of opposition to the PMAC.

The picture is further complicated by contradictory policy directives emanating from the PMAC. For instance, in an attempt to minimize the problems of rising unemployment, it appears that public enterprises have been pressured into creating employment at the expense of efficiency. Between 1975/76 and 1981/82, despite poor production records and a lack of new investment, employment in the nationalized industries increased by 57 percent.⁵⁶ Industrial managers should have had the responsibility of running “profitable businesses,” but many of the managers found themselves to be passive implementers of PMAC’s decisions. They were constrained by *Derg*-appointed officers who often interfered and sometimes overturned their decisions. Such a significant jump in employment without reduction in costs could have a negative impact on the levels of efficiency of the firms and eventually on their margins of profit.

The expansion of the state sector has brought the government into an employer-employee relationship with a sizable proportion of the Ethiopian workforce. This eventually will pose serious political difficulties for the government; the government will, sooner or later, have to “rationalize” state industries (i.e., reduce labor costs). This failure on the part of the PMAC to understand the basics of economic development is another major factor responsible for the poor performance of the industrial and commercial sectors. The government does not seem to realize that control of key economic sectors is only the first step. Massive capital investments are needed to replace outdated machinery and equipment and to expand production capacity; priorities must be set to promote agricultural-industrial linkages; commercial and industrial establishments must be allowed to operate within guidelines with minimum

interference; and, above all, a conducive environment must be created to encourage private investment. Partly dictated by conditions beyond its control, the PMAC's efforts and most of the country's scarce resources have been diverted to the war in Ogaden and in Eritrea and to combatting local opposition groups. Consequently, Ethiopia maintains a military force of about 300,000, far beyond what the country's resources can support. But unless the PMAC resorts to a political solution, the unresolved problems of Ogaden and Eritrea make the strengthening of military power almost mandatory.

Urban Land Reform and Housing

Proclamation No. 47 of 1975 announced the nationalization of urban land and extra houses. Families were allowed to retain ownership of one house; renting was prohibited, except by the government; persons or families who did not own a house might acquire a "possessory right" of up to 500 sq. m. (5,383 sq. ft.) of urban land; and urban residents were to organize into neighborhood associations known as *kebeles*. All "extra houses" became government property and had to be handed over within thirty days. The proclamation immediately called for a 15 to 50 percent reduction in rents for occupants paying less than \$144 per month.

Following the proclamation, a hierarchy of urban dwellers' associations were established. The function of the associations ranged from executing directives given in the proclamation to participating in development activities. In the years of the ideological conflict between the *Derg* and urban opposition groups, the *kebeles* and their defense squads played a major role in eliminating opponents of the military regime. In general, the *kebeles* have not become creative and dynamic social institutions in the same way that the PAs have in the rural areas; they have yet to develop a supportive base among any of the urban social classes.

The government has been making efforts to improve the supply and conditions of urban housing. The nationalization measures discouraged private construction, and the housing shortage has reached a critical stage. The government encourages upper- and middle-income bureaucrats to take bank loans for housing. Proclamation No. 92 of January 1986 reduced the size of a family's entitlement to urban land for housing from 500 to 250 sq. m. (5,380 to 2,690 sq. ft.). The new proclamation also established a standard that regulates housing space, ranging between 14 and 17 sq. m. (151 and 183 sq. ft.). Although some families, particularly those in big cities such as Addis Ababa, have taken advantage of this opportunity, many are discouraged by the shortage of construction materials, which are rationed just as are other essentials,

and the location of available sites, which are often on the periphery of towns.

The situation is most difficult for young adults who wish to get married but can find no housing. This partly accounts for the overcrowding in major urban areas where, on the average, about 17 percent of the housing units in 1978 were reported to be shared by two or more households (*debals*).⁵⁷ To alleviate the housing shortage, some families had rooms taken away from them and given to others to live in, and a few were completely displaced by new residents such as cadres, party officials, or even neighborhood organizations. In 1986 the PMAC issued Proclamation No. 94, which permitted homeowners to rent rooms for a rental fee to be determined by the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH). The familiar stories of housing shortages in socialist states—of long waiting lists of young families without housing, of families with children who have outgrown their current space, and of families who wish to move nearer to work or to relocate to other cities—are told again in Ethiopia, only they are much worse. Government estimates of urban housing needs are put at 90,000 units per year.⁵⁸ Given the government's financial constraints and the limited participation of the private sector, the projected needs require a target that would be too difficult to reach without causing a heavy burden for the national economy.

POSTREVOLUTIONARY CHANGES

In order to appreciate the PMAC's initiative and to assess the prospects for success, we must examine briefly the legacy of the revolution. In 1975 the *Derg* proclaimed its commitment to righting the wrongs of the Haile Selassie government. But in 1982 conditions had actually deteriorated, as the following facts illustrate. The military had inherited an outstanding debt of \$367 million; in 1982 the figure had increased to \$1,011 million. The retail price index in 1974 was 159.7 (1963=100); in 1982 the index rose to 391.6. The balance of payments showed a surplus of \$91 million in 1974; the figure for 1982 showed a deficit of \$88 million. GDP grew at an average annual rate of 4.4 percent in the decade 1960–1970; the growth rate for the period 1970–1982 was 2.2 percent per annum. In terms of food supply, production per capita in 1982 was only 82 percent of the 1971 level, and per capita daily calorie supplies fell from 2,000 in 1970 to 1,758 in 1981.⁵⁹

Although important and potentially beneficial changes, such as the land reform, have been introduced by the PMAC, Ethiopia faces severe economic difficulties, with soaring inflation, a deepening dependency on foreign aid, a high unemployment rate, and a deteriorating balance

of payments—all of which may not be attributable to policies of the *Derg* alone. The *Derg*'s institutional reforms are largely completed, but at an enormous economic and social cost. Agricultural production, largely suffering from the drought and lack of incentives to peasant farmers, has not been able to grow above the annual population growth rate of 2.9 percent. In 1984 about 8 million people were believed to be suffering from starvation. The nationalization of industrial and commercial enterprises simply transferred control and ownership to the state with very little benefit to the various classes. The crisis in living standards is grave, particularly for the urban community: Inflation has increased to rates not seen before, and real wages have plummeted. Table 4.3 presents a comparative analysis of changes in real income of manufacturing employees in Ethiopia before and after the revolution. As the table illustrates, the 1980/81 average real income of an industrial worker was below that of the 1968/69 level. The general trend shows that real income, which began a downturn in 1973/74, has continued to decline at an average rate of 5.5 percent per annum. The government instituted a price control policy to combat inflation in 1975. But it appears that the policy had minimal impact in curbing inflation.

The retail price index jumped from 159.7 (1963=100) in 1974 to 391.6 in 1982 (see Figure 4.1). This rise in the general index was shared by food (179 percent), clothing (59 percent), household items (142 percent), and medical care (90 percent). Thus, using consumer price as a base, inflation increased by about 18 percent annually. One of the major problems that contributed to the inflationary pressure was the money supply, which increased from \$333 million in 1974 to \$893 million in 1982; thus, it appears that the government contributed to the level of inflation by increasing the money supply. Urban wage earners on fixed incomes suffered the most, as purchases of essentials used larger portions of their incomes. In addition, the shortage of food items and other necessities resulted in long queues for grains, sugar, salt, soap, bread, and other essential items. In short, the overall picture of the urban economy has been one of stagnation and uncertainty.

Despite such a dismal economic performance in the rural and urban areas, the economy as a whole showed a modest recovery between 1978 and 1980. Gross domestic product grew by nearly 5.4 percent annually in 1978/79 and 1979/80, following a period of stagnation between 1976 and 1978 (see Table 4.4). The main contributions for this recovery came from agriculture, industry, and distribution services. The revival, initiated through the National Revolutionary Development Campaign (NRDC; economic *zemecha*), reflected return to normalcy in transportation, commercial services, and manufacturing after four years of disruption because of war and internal strife. Since 1980/81, however,

Table 4.3

Changes in Real Income of Manufacturing Employees
(in dollars)^a

Year	Average Annual Earning (1)	Retail Price Index (2)	Real Income (3)
1964/65	276	125.0	221
1965/66	307	126.8	244
1966/67	348	127.8	272
1967/68	-	128.0	-
1968/69	489	129.8	377
1969/70	506	143.0	354
1970/71	540	143.7	376
1971/72	553	135.0	410
1972/73	584	147.0	397
1973/74	737	159.7	462
1974/75	757	170.1	445
1975/76	862	218.7	394
1976/77	934	254.9	366
1977/78	955	291.6	328
1978/79	1002	338.4	296
1979/80	1073	353.5	304
1980/81	1103	375.2	282
1981/82	-	391.6	-

a Calculated at 1 birr=\$0.40 for the period 1964/65 to 1972/73 and 1 birr=\$0.48 for the period since 1973.

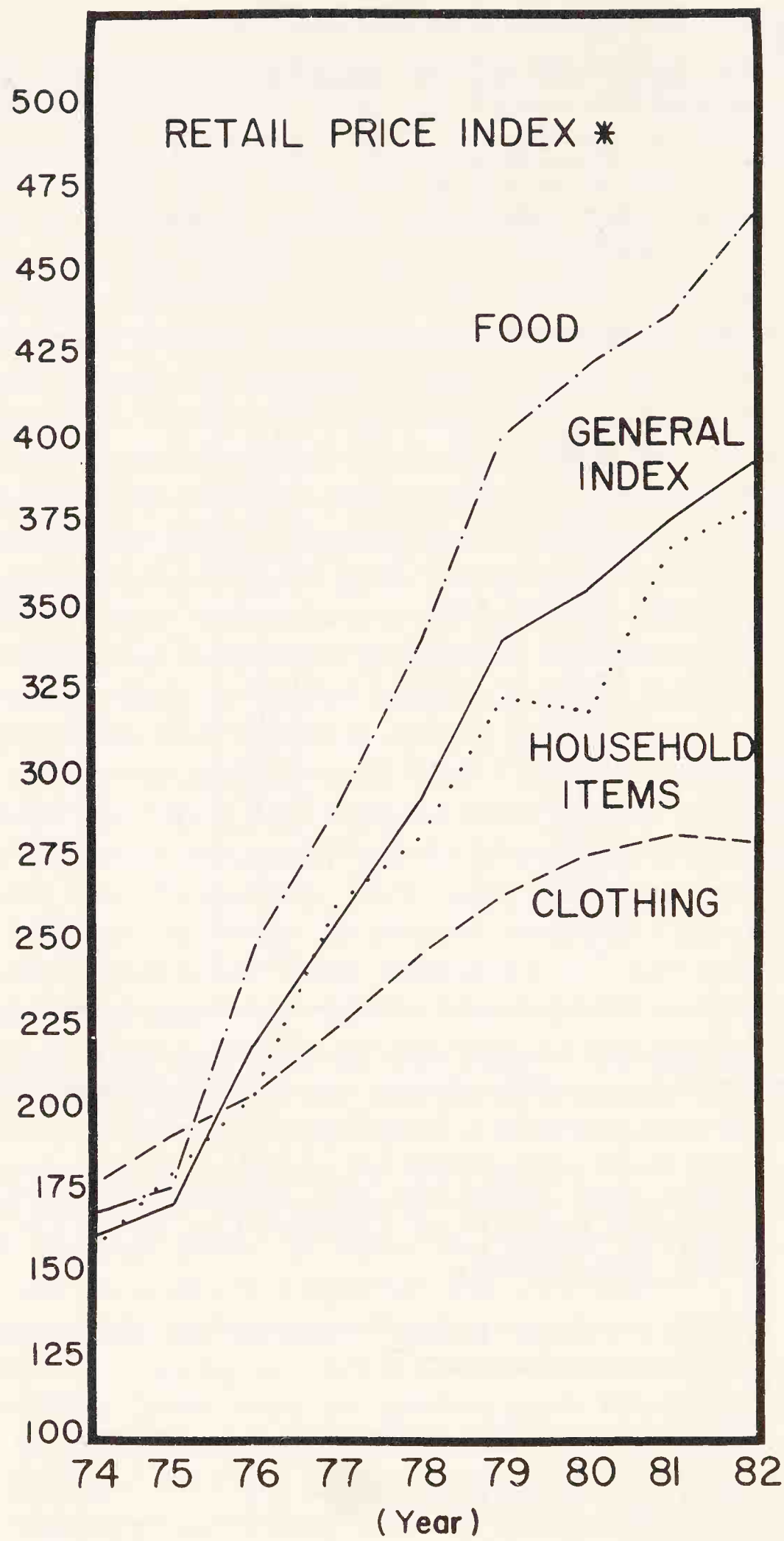
Col.1: Wages and salaries per employee. Data are for manufacturing industries with 10 or more employees.

Col.2: Retail Price Index (based on Addis Ababa price: 1963=100).

Col.3: Computation by authors.

- Data not available.

Source: Central Statistical Office, Statistical Abstract; National Bank of Ethiopia, Quarterly Bulletin (See various issues).



* At market prices; 1963 = 100

FIGURE 4.1 Source: National Bank of Ethiopia, *Annual Report*, 1982

Table 4.4
Gross Domestic Product, 1974/75 - 1982/83 at Constant 1960/61
Factor Cost (in million dollars)^a

Year	Agriculture		Manufacturing		Distribution Services		Other Sectors		Total	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
1974/75	913.2	48.3	81.8	4.3	293.6	15.5	602.3	31.9	1890.9	100
1975/76	937.7	48.9	82.6	4.3	296.3	15.5	599.7	31.3	1916.3	100
1976/77	937.6	48.3	84.5	4.4	297.5	15.3	622.4	32.0	1941.8	100
1977/78	922.7	47.9	81.2	4.2	273.3	14.2	647.4	33.7	1924.5	100
1978/79	944.8	46.6	103.3	5.1	306.2	15.1	672.0	33.2	2026.4	100
1979/80	898.9	46.3	114.1	5.3	323.7	15.1	710.3	33.3	2138.0	100
1980/81	1018.9	46.3	120.5	5.5	334.9	15.2	727.1	33.0	2201.4	100
1981/82	1003.1	44.9	125.4	5.6	350.6	15.7	754.8	33.8	2233.8	100
1982/83	1043.1	44.9	130.7	5.6	370.1	15.9	781.4	33.6	2325.4	100

a Calculated at 1 birr=\$0.48

Source: National Revolutionary Development Campaign and Central
Planning Supreme Council.

the economy witnessed a setback, registering an annual growth rate of 2.9 percent between 1981 and 1983.⁶⁰ The value of exports had also shown an increasing trend—total value of exports increased from \$304.2 million in 1978 to \$401 million in 1982, by 32 percent. We should exercise caution in interpreting export figures, however, because the growth of exports was mostly brought about by an increase in prices. Furthermore, imports increased by about one and half times (from \$516.5 million in 1978 to \$793.3 million in 1982) during the same period, resulting in a trade deficit to \$392 million in 1982 alone. Thus, it is not surprising that the balance-of-payments situation continued to deteriorate, as shown in Table 4.5. Except for 1981, the balance of payments was negative from 1977 to 1982 (Figure 4.2). Because of deteriorating terms of trade and the relatively low disbursement on foreign loans, the country had to draw on its foreign exchange reserves. Between 1977/78 and 1980/81, Ethiopia drew down on its international reserves by more than \$288 million.⁶¹

The stagnation and change in structure of exports is another major problem of the Ethiopian economy. Although the volume of coffee exports has increased by 51 percent since 1974, noncoffee exports have declined significantly. Annual volume of exports of pulses and oilseeds, the second largest export, fell by 77 percent from the prerevolution period; export of canned and frozen meat dropped by about 80 percent; and export of fruits and vegetables fell by about 50 percent. Consequently, with the exception of the Coffee Marketing Corporation, all government export corporations received about \$20 million in subsidies annually between 1982 and 1984 to cover their operational losses.⁶²

By the early 1980s, the government, faced with a serious financial crunch, particularly in foreign exchange, had to call on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for assistance. Foreign exchange reserves in 1983 were down to the equivalent of imports for about one and a half months (compared with more than eleven months in 1977) as a result of the government's need to finance the growing balance-of-trade deficits.⁶³ Aid from the Western world declined after 1975 because of compensation issues regarding nationalized industries and the government's shift toward the Soviet bloc. Until 1980, when talks about compensation claims began to show some progress, the United States, Great Britain, and Japan had suspended all but humanitarian aid, and the World Bank had begun to approve loans for projects related to urban development, road construction, and quality improvement of coffee. In recent years, Ethiopia is believed to have received the smallest amount of aid per capita of all less-developed countries: some \$4.80 per year, compared with a group average of \$16.90. At the end of 1982, Ethiopia's outstanding external debt stood at \$1,011 million, an increase of \$101 million since

Table 4.5
Balance of Payments, 1974-1982 (in million dollars)^a

Item	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83 ^b
Exports	267.1	239.4	278.7	331.2	304.2	423.2	434.5	386.4	401.0
Imports	-289.6	-321.5	-408.8	-493.8	-516.5	-599.8	-740.1	-733.9	-793.1
1. Trade Balance	-22.5	-97.0	-130.1	-162.6	-212.3	-176.5	-305.6	-347.4	-392.3
2. Factor Services & Private Transfer	85.9	50.8	97.1	74.2	36.4	33.5	58.2	114.4	106.6
3. Current Account Balance (1+2)	63.4	-46.1	-33.0	-88.5	-175.4	-144.0	-247.3	232.9	-285.7
4. Payment & Non-Monetary Capital	51.0	71.2	66.4	36.4	88.2	137.5	157.4	310.6	227.7
5. Adjustments	-23.5	-21.4	-17.9	-12.1	1.1	-12.0	-25.6	16.7	-30.3
6. Overall Balance (3+4+5)	90.9	3.6	15.6	-64.2	-86.2	-14.6	-115.4	94.4 ^c	-88.3

a Calculated at 1 birr=\$0.48.

b Preliminary.

c \$40.2 million of reevaluation reserves added.

Source: National Bank of Ethiopia, Annual Report, 1980, p. 52; 1982, p. 71.

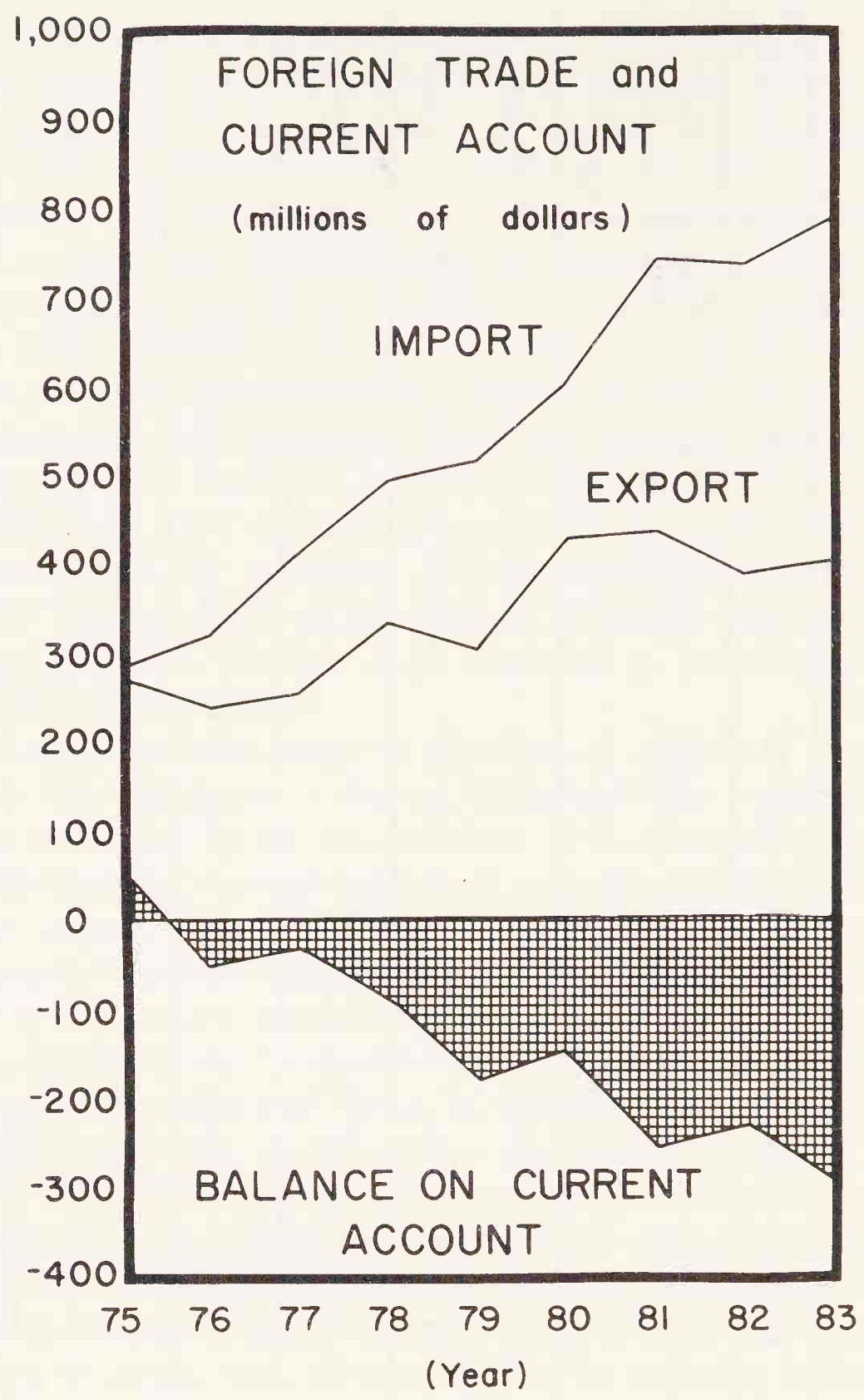


FIGURE 4.2 Data derived from Table 4.5

1981.⁶⁴ The major holders of the debt were the World Bank and other international organizations (\$441 million), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (\$249 million), the Soviet bloc Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) countries (\$63 million), and others (\$255 million).

Internally, the government had to rely on foreign and domestic borrowing as the budget deficit continued to increase. Table 4.6 gives a general summary of the government's financial situation. Although revenue and grants continued to increase, the government was unable to meet the increase in expenditure. In 1978/79 the government raised

Table 4.6
Central Government Finance: Summary (in million dollars)^a

Item	1974/75	1975/76	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82	1982/83 ^b
Total Revenue	341.5	374.9	500.9	572.3	660.1	748.5	834.5	874.4	1008.0
Expenditure ^c									
Current	351.0	530.8	612.5	767.0	775.1	929.9	1006.2	1093.1	1466.3
Capital	253.8	411.9	470.5	638.7	615.3	743.0	795.9	812.4	969.6
Overall Deficit	98.7	118.8	142.0	128.3	159.8	186.9	210.3	280.7	496.6
	108.2	155.9	111.6	194.7	115.0	181.3	171.7	218.7	458.3
Ext. Borrowing	44.0	50.1	42.2	34.4	77.3	68.5	61.5	221.1	194.4
Int. Borrowing	64.3	105.8	69.4	160.4	37.7	112.8	110.2	230.8	261.5

a Calculated at 1 birr=\$0.48.

b Budget figures.

c Net of imputed values of external grants in kind.

Source: Ministry of Finance. See also National Bank of Ethiopia, Annual Report, 1980, p.41; 1982, p. 42.

taxes and revenues increased, but the concomitant increase in expenditures pushed the deficit figure even higher (Figure 4.3). The 1982/83 budget deficit jumped to a record high of \$458 million, and internal and external financing increased fourfold from the 1974/75 figure.

Part of the increase in deficit is related to the government's security problems and the need to give priority to national defense. The 1983 allocation showed that out of a total budget of \$1.6 billion, 29 percent was set aside for defense and public security, whereas agriculture and education received 11 percent each, and industry and health received 6 and 4 percent respectively (Table 4.7). But these were budget figures, and actual expenditures, particularly for defense, were often higher than allocated figures, the experiences of previous years showed. For instance, the 1980/81 government expenditure showed that out of a total budget of \$835.8 million, 51 percent had been spent for defense and security whereas agriculture had received only 2.9 percent of the budget; education and culture had received 13.2 percent, and health, 4.7 percent.⁶⁵ Given the various internal and external problems of the PMAC, it should not come as a surprise that the government's priority lay in strengthening defense.

To get a better handle on the economic problems of the nation, the PMAC in 1979 set up a supreme body known as the National Revolutionary Development Campaign and Central Planning Supreme Council (NRDC & CPSC). The council is responsible for the formulation and direction of development plans. The first ten-year development plan for the period 1984/85–1993/94 has set as targets (1) attaining an annual growth of 6.5 percent for the overall economy (this growth is expected to result from a 4.3 percent increase in agriculture, a 10.8 percent growth in industry, and a 6.9 percent increase in services); (2) achieving an investment rate of 16.8 percent; (3) securing an annual aid level of \$700 million in 1980/81 prices; and (4) providing new employment for 5 million people. In addition, the plan contains an extensive discussion of policies, objectives, and projects. It also encourages the participation of the private sector, foreign as well as domestic.⁶⁶

Given the country's resources, the targets set are overly optimistic and the chances of receiving the projected foreign aid or increasing the participation of the private sector are very small. The 1983 proclamation (Proclamation No. 235) was issued in order to entice the foreign private sector by providing a wide range of incentives. But the investment problem stems not so much from the lack of incentives as from the restrictiveness of a government policy that has precluded the private sector from participating in profitable ventures. Moreover, the prevailing uncertainty regarding the role of the private sector vis-à-vis the PMAC's policies has left the private sector apprehensive and reluctant to risk

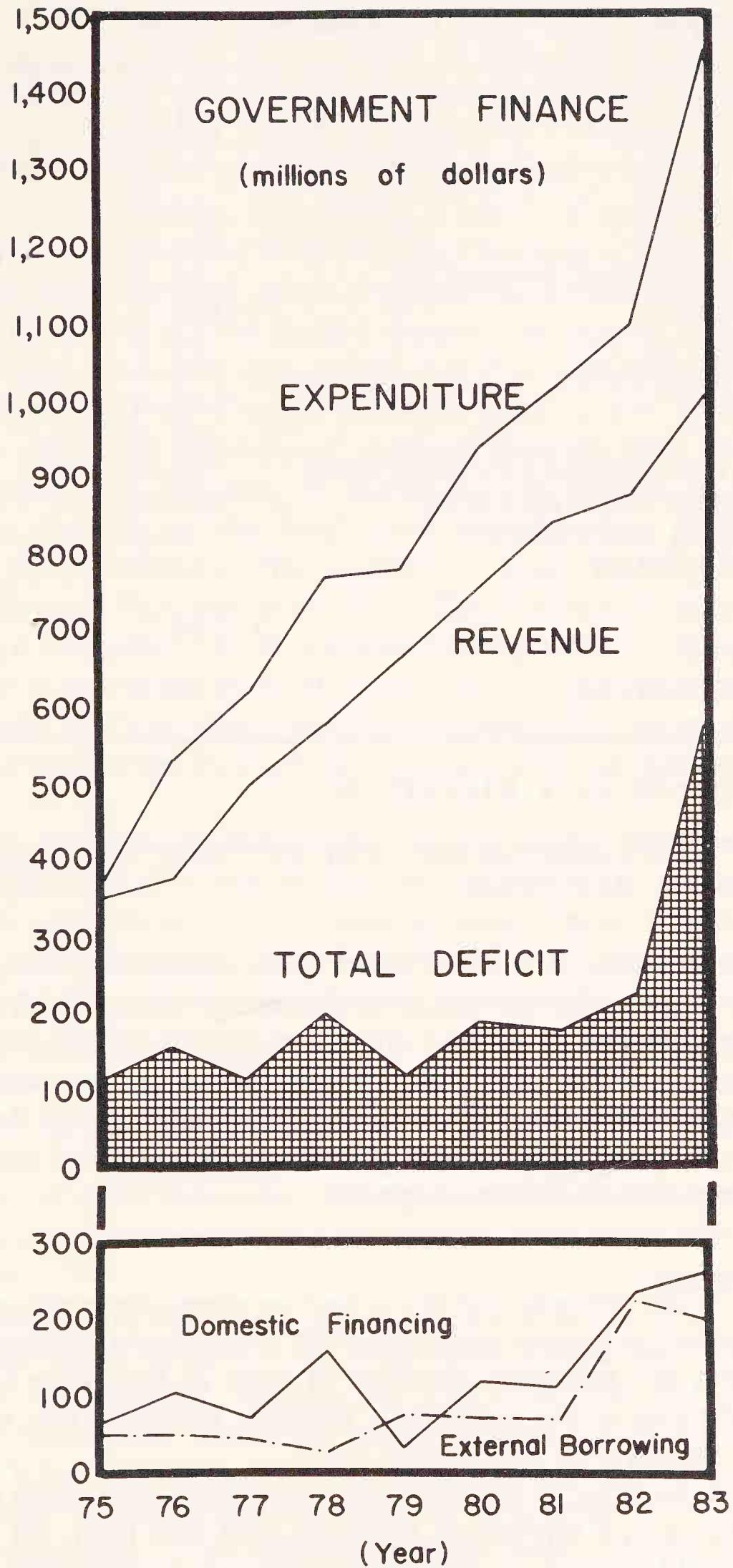


FIGURE 4.3 Data derived from Table 4.6

Table 4.7
State Budget, 1983 (in million dollars)^a

Item	Allocation	%
Organs of State	27.7	2.0
Defense	394.2	25.0
Public Order and Security	69.6	4.0
Agriculture	168.2	11.0
Industry	96.9	6.0
Mining and Water	200.9	13.0
Education	180.6	11.0
Health	66.3	4.0
Housing and Community Services	18.8	1.0
Other State Expenditures	340.0	21.0
Public Debt Service	1.2	0.08
Price Subsidies	32.0	2.0
Total	1,596.1	100.0
Expected Deficit	470.0	29.0

a Calculated at 1 birr=\$0.48

Source: Proclamation No. 240 of 1983, Negarit Gazetta, Addis Ababa, May 1983.

new investment. There is a real need for a conducive business climate and a clear-cut government policy to encourage savings and investment by the large number of traders, manufacturers, and others outside the public sector. Whether or not the targets set in the ten-year plan will be realized, despite the difficult economic conditions of the country, will depend on the PMAC's ability to marshal resources and to create the necessary climate for development.

SUMMARY

In general, economic progress under the imperial regime was very sluggish, and the economic standing of most of Ethiopian society was poor. On the eve of the revolution, Ethiopia remained one of the least developed countries in the world.

In 1974 the country was swept by major demonstrations and strikes that culminated in a revolution. Between 1974 and 1975, the *Derg*, with the enthusiastic support of many revolutionary groups, dedicated itself with vigor to carrying out social, economic, and political reforms. These

reforms had far-reaching consequences. The main goal of the *Derg's* program was to promote the principle of Ethiopian socialism, defined to include economic independence, social justice, the common good, and the unity of Ethiopia. Rarely in Africa has a military establishment espoused such a radical goal upon taking power; even less frequently has one followed through by enacting a series of legislations.

The major institutional reforms of the *Derg* appear largely completed. In the rural areas, the land reform program has altered agrarian patterns permanently, destroying the feudal system. The reform programs have helped increase on-farm consumption but have not stimulated farmers to increase productivity. The government's price-control system and the attempt to distribute agricultural products through state channels, on the one hand, and the lack of incentives for farmers to bring their products to markets, on the other, have created serious food shortages, especially in urban areas. The situation is aggravated by the drought that has plagued Ethiopia since 1972. The military envisages the PAs as playing a transitory role in national development. As the power base of the PAs is restricted to local levels (the PAs are effectively cut off from national politics), their potential to develop into an organized class that can articulate the interests of the rural areas at the national level is limited.

In the urban areas, the PMAC has yet to win the support of the urban community. The nationalization of industrial and commercial enterprises and the urban land and housing reform programs shifted economic power from the urban bourgeoisie to the state apparatus. The urban community, whose expectations soared following the 1974 revolution, has yet to see any benefits. Domestic economic problems—such as wage freezes, soaring inflation, rising unemployment, and shortage of essentials, especially food supply—are affecting all levels, with greater hardships being felt by those who live on fixed incomes. Real wages of most industrial and commercial workers are well below 1973/74 levels, and the standard of living in urban areas has, in general, plummeted.

In terms of development priorities, the PMAC's policy is directed toward rural areas, at least in the short term. Urban areas are relegated to a lower-level priority because the PMAC realizes that its strength lies in the rural areas, where the majority of Ethiopia's population lives and where it has had some success in redistributing land and in organizing the peasantry. Consequently, although the rural areas are not necessarily better off—because of problems associated with drought, lack of fertilizers, credits, and so forth—urban areas are faced with critical problems arising from the *Derg's* reduced commitment to alleviate urban problems.

With the onset of an international recession, the Ethiopian economy faces a deterioration in its balance of payments, soaring inflation rates, and an increase in the budget deficit. In terms of strategy, the *Derg* has been stumbling from one crisis to another, and some of its economic policies—such as the production campaigns, the price controls, and the move to create producers' cooperatives—have had very little positive impact. In an attempt to consolidate the gains of the revolution and to give direction to national development efforts, the PMAC has initiated a planning process under the control of the CPSC. But the plan has set overly optimistic goals that are difficult to realize, given the country's resources. Under the *Derg*, the Ethiopian economy has undergone major institutional and structural reforms, but the PMAC tried to do too much too quickly with too few resources. Process often substituted for results; policies often overlooked contradictions across programs; and impressive legislations conveyed an illusion of significance without achieving objectives.

NOTES

1. Lars Bondestam notes that although the Labor Exchange Office in the three largest industrial towns (Addis Ababa, Asmera, and Dire Dawa) could find jobs for 22 percent of the applicants in 1968, in 1971 this figure had fallen to just 9 percent. See Bondestam, "Notes on Multinational Corporations in Ethiopia," *African Review* 5 (1975), p. 540. John Markakis and Nega Ayele cite a 1972 study by the Planning Commission Office that projected an urban unemployment rate of 20 percent by 1990, with 40 percent for the 14–24 age group; see their *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia* (Nottingham: Spokesman, 1978), p. 47, note 16.

2. Richard K. Pankhurst, *Economic History of Ethiopia, 1800–1935* (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University Press, 1968), p. 721.

3. Throughout this chapter, the exchange rate of 1 birr = \$0.40 was used to convert birr to dollars for the period 1960–1973; 1 birr = \$0.48 was used for after 1973. For exchange rates, see World Bank, *World Tables*, 3rd edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1984), p. 56.

4. Patrick Gilkes, *The Dying Lion: Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), p. 158.

5. Other major limitations of GDP as an indicator of economic performance are: First, GDP is the total value of goods and services, and an increase in GDP says nothing about its use—any increase may benefit only a small group of the rich, whereas the mass of the people may be worse off; second, price changes distort the real value of GDP—if prices rise, the value of GDP will increase even if the quantities of goods and services produced remain the same.

6. World Bank, *World Development Report 1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 112.

7. Gilkes, *The Dying Lion*, p. 139.

8. Ibid., p. 101.

9. The north-south distinction in land tenure is the most commonly used approach in classifying land tenure systems in Ethiopia. Some writers, however, argue that the approach has "limited explanatory value." Dessalegn Rahmato warns that the north-south distinction in land tenure could "easily get [one] bogged down in fruitless technicalities" in trying to sort out the various types of tenure systems. See Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia* (Trenton, N.J.: The Red Sea Press, 1985), p. 17. For a general account on land tenure, see Alan Hoben, *Land Tenure Among the Amhara of Ethiopia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973); John M. Cohen and Dov Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia: The Social Background to a Revolution* (Assen, the Netherlands: Van Gorcum & Co., 1975); John Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), chapters 4 and 5.

10. Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia*, p. 32, cite cases in famine areas of Tigray where *rist* land had been sold to local elites. If so, this is a significant departure from an old system.

11. Ibid., n. 4, p. 68; Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, p. 19.

12. Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia*, p. 45.

13. Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, Table 3, p. 24.

14. Gilkes, *The Dying Lion*, p. 115. According to Marina Ottaway and David Ottaway, *Empire in Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1978), p. 16, 46 percent of the peasants were tenants. Cohen and Weintraub, *Land and Peasants in Imperial Ethiopia*, Table 11, give figures for tenancy ranging from 39 to 75 percent.

15. For more on Afar and other pastoralists, see Tefera-Work Beshah and John Harbeson, "Afar Pastoralists in Transition and the Ethiopian Revolution," *Journal of African Studies* 5:3 (Fall 1978), pp. 249–267; John Harbeson, "Territorial and Development Politics in the Horn of Africa: The Afar of the Awash Valley," *African Affairs* 77:309 (October 1978), pp. 479–498; Lars Bondestam, "People and Capitalism in the North-East Lowlands of Ethiopia," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 12:4 (1974), pp. 423–439; Kassim Shehim, "Ethiopia, Revolution, and the Question of Nationalities: The Case of the Afar," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 23:2 (June 1985), pp. 331–348.

16. Swedish University of Agriculture, *Ethiopia: A Study of the Rural Sector—A Preliminary Report* (Uppsala: Swedish University of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, International Rural Development Division, 1976), p. 215.

17. Michael Stahl, *Ethiopia: Political Contradictions in Agricultural Development* (Stockholm: Robin and Sjogren, 1974); Bisrat Aklilu, "The Diffusion of Fertilizer in Ethiopia: Pattern Determinants and Implications," *Journal of Developing Areas* 14 (April 1980), pp. 385–399.

18. Stahl points out that in 1969–1970 a total of 538 tenants moved out of the northern Chilalo area and that among them were 392 families evicted as a direct consequence of mechanization. Stahl's projection suggests that, based on these numbers, by 1975 around 68 percent of the 1968 tenants in Chilalo area would have been evicted (Stahl, *Ethiopia*, pp. 103–104). Cohen notes that

by 1974 it was estimated that between 2,500 and 5,000 tenant households had been evicted and that eventually over 90,000 families would be evicted. See John Cohen, "Foreign Involvement in the Formulation of Ethiopia's Land Tenure Policies: Part I," *Northeast African Studies* 7:2 (1985), p. 33.

19. Note that the decline occurs only if the change in the exchange rate between the dollar and the birr is not reflected. In birr, real wages declined from 1,024 birr in 1971/72 to 962 birr in 1973/74.

20. Robert S. Love, "Economic Change in Pre-Revolutionary Ethiopia," *African Affairs* 78 (July 1979), p. 353.

21. For a general assessment of developments in education, health, and infrastructure during the Haile Selassie period, see Harold D. Nelson and Irving Kaplan, eds., *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, 3rd edition (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981), pp. 123–138 and 173–177.

22. Assefa Bequele and Eshetu Chole, *A Profile of the Ethiopian Economy* (Addis Ababa: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 11.

23. In terms of infrastructure facilities, in 1975/76, more than 75 percent of the communication services, 54 percent of the power capacity, and 38 percent of all-weather roads were concentrated in and around Addis Ababa and Asmera. See Mulatu Wubneh, *A Spatial Analysis of Urban-Industrial Development in Ethiopia* (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1982), p. 113.

24. National Bank of Ethiopia, *Quarterly Bulletin* 1:3 (1975), p. 81.

25. Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, *Investment Guide to Ethiopia*, 2nd edition (Addis Ababa, 1974), p. 46.

26. Markakis and Nega Ayele, *Class and Revolution in Ethiopia*, p. 45.

27. National Bank of Ethiopia, *Quarterly Bulletin* 5:4 (1979), p. 98.

28. Duri Mohammed, "Industrialization and Income Distribution in Ethiopia," in J.F. Rweyemamu, ed., *Industrialization and Income Distribution in Africa* (Dakar: Codesira Books, 1980), p. 38.

29. PMAC, *Declaration of the Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, December 20, 1974), p. 8.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

31. PMAC, *Declaration on Economic Policy of Socialist Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, February 7, 1975), p. 3.

32. For an illustrative account of the response to land reform, see Alan Hoben, *Social Soundness of Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, USAID, February 1976, p. 7.

33. Keith Griffin and Roger Hay, "Problems of Agricultural Development in Socialist Ethiopia: An Overview and a Suggested Strategy," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13:1 (October 1985), Table 10, p. 53; quote from Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, p. 51.

34. Alula Abate, "Peasant Associations and Collective Agriculture in Ethiopia: Promises and Performance," *Journal of African Studies* 10:3 (1983), pp. 104–107.

35. PMAC, *Ethiopia: Ten Year Investment Programme, 1984/85–1993/94* (Addis Ababa, 1984), p. 82 (in Amharic).

36. It is important to note that our interpretation is not to imply that there has not been redistribution within the jurisdiction of each PA, rather it is to indicate that the government is reluctant to undertake large-scale redistribution of land including readjustment of PA boundaries. As membership increases due to population pressure, PAs are forced to undertake periodic redistributions within their jurisdiction. The recurring redistribution or readjustment has dissatisfied many farmers who are forced to give up portions of their plots to accommodate new members. For problems associated with redistribution of land, see Dessalegn Rahmato, *Agrarian Reform in Ethiopia*, pp. 40–62.

37. *Africa Report* 30:2 (March–April 1985), p. 44, and 31:2 (May–June 1986), pp. 51–52.

38. For an analysis of the problems of evaluating the impacts of land reform and revolutionary programs of the *Derg* on food production, see John M. Cohen, "Analyzing the Ethiopian Revolution: A Cautionary Tale," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 18:4 (1980), pp. 685–691.

39. A recent estimate of the performance of the agricultural sector shows that agricultural output in 1983/84 and 1984/85 declined 10 and 16 percent respectively. See Office of the National Committee for Central Planning (ONCCP), *Guidelines for the Preparation and Presentation of the 1986/87–1988/89 Three Year Plan* (Addis Ababa, 1986), p. 4 (in Amharic).

40. Griffin and Hay believe that the pattern of operation of the AMC has been to buy from the five provinces mentioned to supply the three major cities—Addis Ababa, Asmera, and Dire Dawa. They also estimate that AMC handles about 30 to 40 percent of the cereals retailed in the three major cities. See Griffin and Hay, "Problems of Agricultural Development in Socialist Ethiopia," pp. 46–49.

41. Personal information. According to the World Bank, the 1984/85 AMC selling price for a quintal of teff (white) was \$33 and the open market, Addis Ababa price for the same quintal of teff was \$101. See World Bank, *Ethiopia: An Export Action Program*, October 3, 1986 (Report No. 6432-ET), Annex Table 34, p. 181.

42. See U.S., Senate, Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy, Committee on the Judiciary, *Ethiopia and Sudan One Year Later: Refugee and Famine Recovery Needs*, 99th Congress, 2nd sess. (April 1986), p. 5.

43. *Ethiopian Herald*, February 15, 1986, p. 1.

44. Griffin and Hay, "Problems of Agricultural Development in Socialist Ethiopia," p. 54.

45. *Washington Post*, December 31, 1984, p. A9.

46. *New York Times*, January 21, 1985, p. A6.

47. One of the leading critiques of the program came from Doctors Without Borders (Medecines Sans Frontieres), the Paris-based group of doctors and nurses. They maintain that as a result of mass deportations and forced resettlement, as many as 300,000 people are expected to die because of shortages of food, water, and medical assistance in settlement areas plagued with malaria and sleeping sickness. *Africa Report* 31:3 (May–June 1986), p. 52.

48. See *New York Times*, December 12, 1984, p. A4; *Washington Post*, December 12, 1984, p. A20; *Africa Report* 30:1 (January-February 1985), p. 40. Higher figures, of up to \$200 million spent for the celebration, are cited by *Newsweek*, November 26, 1984, p. 54, and in Lafayette A. Barnes, "Ethiopian Famine: International Response," *Congressional Research Service Review*, 99th Congress, 6:5 (May 1985), p. 7.

49. Both quotes from *Newsweek*, December 24, 1984, p. 26.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 26. A study by the U.S. Government Accounting Office indicated that the U.S. government knew that a "disaster situation" existed in Ethiopia in May 5, 1983, but delayed responding to requests for aid from a U.S. volunteer organization working in Ethiopia because of "several policy concerns" about providing food to a Soviet-backed Marxist regime. See *Washington Post*, May 10, 1985, p. A22.

51. *Newsweek*, November 26, 1984, p. 54.

52. Glen Bailey, *An Analysis of the Ethiopian Revolution* (Athens, Ohio: Center for International Studies, Ohio University, 1980), p. 101.

53. For more see Mulatu Wubneh, *A Spatial Analysis of Urban-Industrial Development in Ethiopia*, pp. 66-83.

54. See IBRD, *Economic Memorandum on Ethiopia*, December 15, 1985 (Report No. 35526-ET) Table 8.3, p. 77.

55. National Bank of Ethiopia, *Annual Report* 1982, p. 13.

56. The increase reflects both temporary and permanent employment. If only permanent employees are considered, the increase is 30 percent. See National Bank of Ethiopia, *Annual Report*, 1980, 1981, 1982.

57. Central Statistical Office (CSO), *Labor Force and Housing Characteristics of Seventeen Major Towns: Results of the Manpower and Housing Survey 1978*, Statistics Bulletin No. 27, Addis Ababa, August 1980, p. 293.

58. Ministry of Urban Development and Housing and CSO, *Level of Urbanization and Assessment of Housing Needs and Demands of Urban Centers of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, January 1980), p. 18.

59. IBRD, *World Development Report* 1984 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), Table 6, p. 228, and Table 24, p. 264. A 1986 World Bank report indicated that per capita agricultural output declined by 1.6 percent per annum between 1974 and 1984. See World Bank, *Ethiopia: An Export Action Program*, p. 1.

60. According to the Office of the National Committee for Central Planning, GDP in 1983/84 and 1984/85 declined by 3.7 and 6.5 percent, respectively. See ONCCP, *Guidelines for the Preparation of the 1986/87-1988/89 Three Year Plan*, p. 3. See also Eshetu Chole, "Constraints to Industrial Development in Ethiopia," Paper presented at the Second Triennial Congress of OSSREA held in Eldoret, Kenya, July 28-31, 1986, p. 22.

61. IBRD, *Economic Memorandum*, p. 5.

62. World Bank, *Ethiopia: An Export Action Program*, Annex Table 35, p. 182.

63. *African Economic Digest*, April 15, 1983, p. 4.

64. National Bank of Ethiopia, *Annual Report* 1982, Annex IV.2, p. 72. According to the World Bank, Ethiopia's outstanding external debt in 1984 stood

at \$1,384.2 million. World Bank, *Financing Adjustments with Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1986-90* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 1986), p. 80.

65. CSO, *Statistical Abstract of Ethiopia, 1980* (Addis Ababa, 1980), p. 186.

66. Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), *Guidelines on the Economic and Social Development of Ethiopia, 1983/84-1993/94*, September 1984, pp. 28-29 (unofficial translation). See also Amharic version of the plan.

5

Population, Culture, and Society

The population of Ethiopia (estimated at 42 million in 1984) consists of about eighty ethnic groups who speak over seventy distinct languages.¹ There is great ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity brought about by centuries of interaction between these groups. The expansion of Ethiopia over several hundred years added many ethnic groups to the original Amhara and Tigray inhabitants of the Christian kingdom perched on the northern plateau. The Oromo migration of the sixteenth century and the southward expansion of Ethiopia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries brought such groups as the Sidama, the Somali, the Afar, and many other smaller ethnic groups as additions to the ethnic and cultural mosaic.

Ethiopia's major languages fall into the Afro-Asiatic group. The major subgroups are Semitic (e.g., Amharic, Tigrinya), Cushitic (e.g., Oromo, Sidama, Somali), and Omotic (e.g., Welayta, Kefa). There is a small group along the Sudan border that speaks the languages of the Nilo-Saharan family.² Amharic was the official language of the imperial government and is still the major language of the present government. It is estimated that over half of the population speaks Amharic. As the main written language, it is also the medium of instruction in elementary schools. Other major languages such as Oromo, Tigrinya, Welayta, and Somali are being used to expand the adult literacy programs. By 1982, the languages of instruction for the literacy program included fifteen major languages covering the mother tongues of about 93 percent of the population. The national radio broadcasts in several languages.

The two major religions are Christianity and Islam. Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity is akin to the Eastern Orthodox Church, but Ethiopia's isolation for hundreds of years has contributed to the development of an indigenous form of Christianity. About 50 percent of the population is Christian; about 40 percent is Muslim. Christianity was the official state religion until 1974, when the military government eliminated the privileged status of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. At



The Abun, head of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, performing rites in front of the baptismal fountain in Addis Ababa on the Feast of Timket (Epiphany) in 1953. (United Nations)

present, all religions are considered to be of equal status in relation to the state. In 1977 the military government moved against the Ethiopian Orthodox Church by arresting the church's patriarch, Abune Teophilos. He was subsequently charged of crimes against the Ethiopian people and was later believed to have been killed. Between 1977 and 1982, a number of church leaders disappeared; some left the country out of fear for their lives, and others were forcibly retired. The policy of the present government vis-à-vis religion includes a broad attack on the authority and role of religious forces. This attack is designed to weaken the influences of religion in the country as the PMAC proceeds to shape the Ethiopian society according to its socialist ideology.

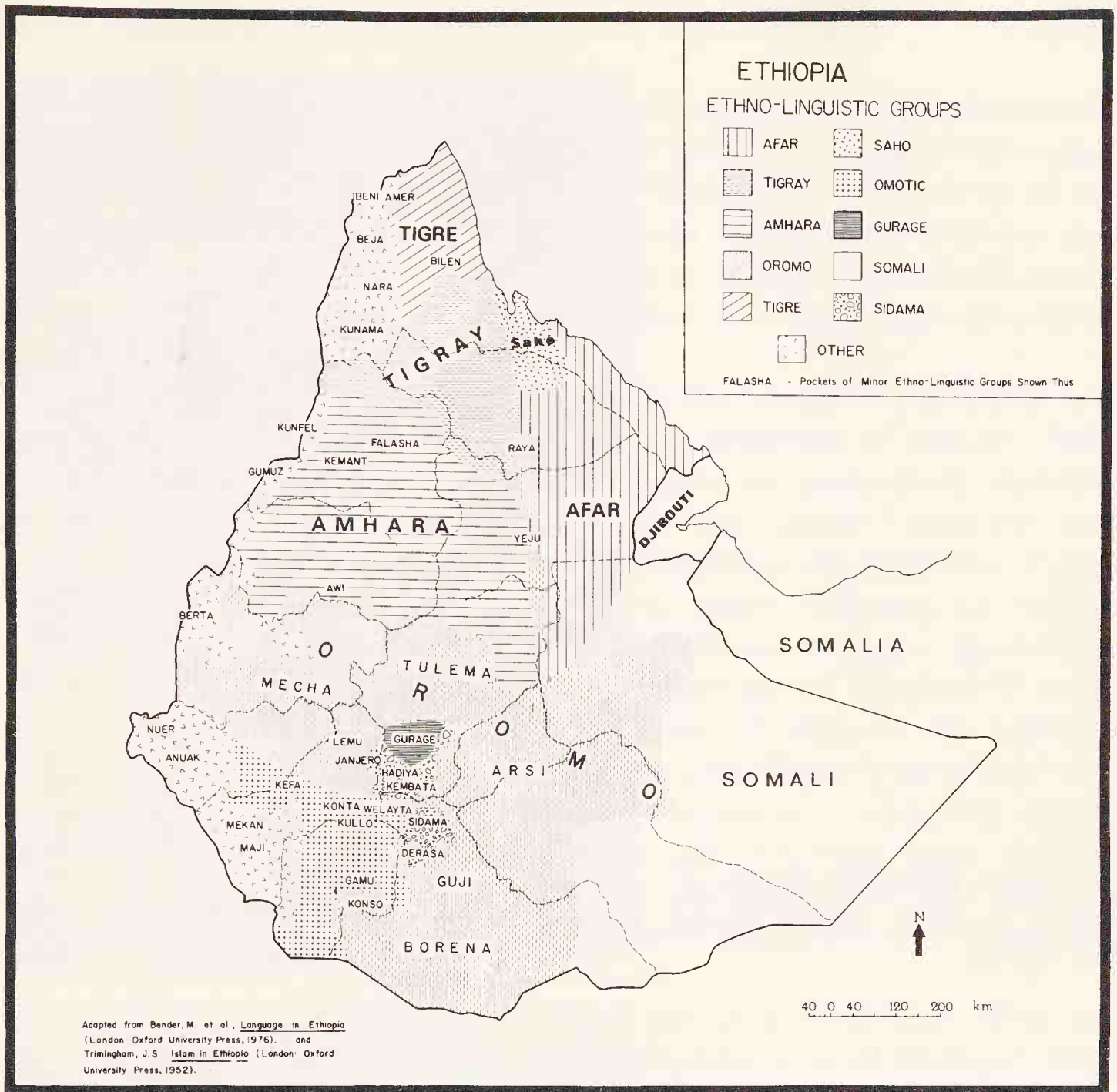
Traditionally, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has been the custodian of Ethiopian artistic and other intellectual expressions. As a result, much of Ethiopia's traditional painting, music, and literature has been religious and semireligious in character. In recent years, however, as Ethiopian society continues to adapt to changes that have come with modernization, modern art following Western style, Amharic literature, and secular music have developed. In this chapter, we offer a cursory look at the cultural characteristics of the various ethnic groups and the changes that have resulted from modernization, especially in education, urbanization, and in the role of women.

ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

To date, there has been no census on ethnic and religious groups in Ethiopia. Based on a Ford Foundation language survey of 1970, the Oromo are the largest ethnic group and make up about 40 percent of the population, followed by the Amhara with about 30 percent and the Tigray with about 12–15 percent.³ The Amhara, Oromo, and Tigray, together with the Sidama (a name used for convenience to refer to a cluster of ethnic groups around the Omo River, after their largest component),⁴ make up about 90 percent of the population, and most of them are concentrated on the highland plateau. The lowlands in the north and east are the home of seminomadic, Muslim pastoralists of the Beja, Saho, Afar, and Somali, and the western lowlands are inhabited by sedentary cultivators of the Nara, Kunama, Gumuz, Berta, Anuak, and Nuer (Map 5.1). Using ecological patterns (a simplified classification system), the various ethnic groups may be divided into two major groups: the people of the highlands and those of the lowlands.

The People of the Highlands

The Amhara are a predominantly Christian people occupying the plateau in Gojam, Gonder, northern Shewa, and western Welo. They are also found in large numbers in many urban centers and in the southern administrative regions, where they settled after the area was annexed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most of the Amhara earn their livelihood as small farmers growing such crops as teff, barley, wheat, sorghum, corn, peas, and beans; they also raise cattle, sheep, and goats. Amharic, which is derived from the ancient Semitic language Geez (also known as Ethiopic), is spoken not only by the Amhara but by a large number of other ethnic groups. The Amhara tend to identify more with their regions (such as Gojam, Gonder, Welo, and Shewa) but identify themselves as Amhara when they distinguish themselves from other ethnic groups. Social interactions among the



MAP 5.1



An Oromo family in Ethiopia taking their morning meal outside their home in 1953. (United Nations)



Men stack wheat for storage in Damot in 1975. (World Bank/Ray Witlin)



A man from the southeastern part of Ethiopia. (United Nations/O. Monsen)

Amhara tend to be personal and localized. In spite of their small numbers (they are not a majority group), the Amhara have dominated the Ethiopian political scene for several hundred years. The Amhara leadership of the twentieth century, which was primarily from Shewa, used Amharic and Christianity as integrating factors to forge a nation with a multi-ethnic society. This process of Amharaization has aroused some resentment among some Oromo and Tigray.

An ethnic group closely allied with the Amhara culturally and politically are the Tigray, who founded the kingdom of Aksum. They speak Tigrinya, a Semitic language that uses the same Geez alphabet as Amharic. Like the Amhara, the Tigray are mostly Christians and settled cultivators. As the center of the Aksumite kingdom, the Tigray area has been inhabited for thousands of years, resulting in erosion and exhaustion of the soil. This has contributed to poor agriculture, food storages, and a relatively high outmigration of Tigreans to other parts of the country. In spite of a long history of alliance and common culture and religion between the Amhara and Tigray, there has been Tigrean resentment of Amhara political dominance, especially in the last hundred years. This has manifested itself in several ways, ranging from excessive Tigrean provincialism (including the claim that Tigreans are the genuine descendants of the Aksumite civilization) to occasional insubordination to the central government.

The Oromo are the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia.⁵ They are found in most of central, southern, and western parts of Ethiopia. They comprise a dozen ethnic groups, all speaking dialects of the Cushitic language of Oromo. The Oromo were nomadic or seminomadic pastoralists living in southern Ethiopia practicing traditional religion and *gada* (a term that refers to a social system that groups men of the same generation into sets with a range of social, political, and ritual rights and responsibilities).⁶ In the sixteenth century they spread northwards to find new areas for a growing population and to fulfill the duties of a warrior tradition. The Oromo became dominant in many areas, created enclaves in a few, and were absorbed by established communities in others. Although their migration brought them into contact with diverse peoples and influenced their religion, culture, and social organization, it also loosened the ties that characterized Oromos of the premigration era. There are now distinct cultural variations among the Oromo of different regions. The Amhara and the Tigray are predominantly Christian, but among the Oromo there are Christians, Muslims, and those who observe traditional belief systems, reflecting their diverse contacts. For instance, most of the Oromo of Arsi and Harer are Muslim pastoralists and settled cultivators. The Shewa Oromo, who have intermarried extensively with the Amhara, are almost all settled cultivators and

Christians. The Yeju Oromo have intermarried with the Afar and Šaho and are Muslim pastoralists. The Oromo of Borena are pastoralists and still adhere to their traditional religion and *gada*.

The fourth largest group in the plateau are the Sidama of southwestern Ethiopia.⁷ Sidama also refers to a family of Cushitic languages spoken by the people. The Sidama, Kembata, and Hadiya are the largest group in the region and are estimated to number 1.8 million. The Sidama occupy one of the most fertile and densely populated parts of Ethiopia. They practice intensive agriculture and grow grain crops, *enset*, and cash crops such as coffee and tobacco. They also raise cattle, sheep, and horses. Some of the Sidama are Christians, some Muslims, and the rest profess traditional belief systems. The Sidama appear to have retained some aspects of traditional rule based on the *gada* system. West of the Sidama are a group of Omotic-speaking people, the largest of whom are the Welamo (Welayta) and Kefa. As early as the fourteenth century, a number of independent Muslim kingdoms had evolved in this part of Ethiopia, but only two, Kefa and Janjero, survived until they were conquered by Emperor Menelik in the nineteenth century. Among the most famous of the states in this area were the Hadiya, Kembata, Welamo, Kullo-Konta, Gofa, and Gemu.

North of the Sidama are the Gurage, estimated to number about 500,000 and located in southern Shewa.⁸ They are settled cultivators of the staple crop *enset*. In spite of their small number, the Gurage show diversity in language and religion, probably reflecting long-term contacts with neighboring people. They appear to be equally divided into Christians, Muslims, and practitioners of indigenous belief systems. The Gurage speak various dialects of the Semitic language Guraginya, which has been strongly influenced by Amharic and Sidama. The Gurage, considered one of most enterprising people in Ethiopia, are found in large numbers in major urban centers and engage primarily in retail trade, vegetable gardening, manual labor, and other service-related occupations.

The smallest group of the plateau people are the Agew, numbering about 170,000, who are found scattered in Eritrea, Gonder, and Gojam. The Agew are remnants of the original inhabitants of the Ethiopian plateau before the emergence of the kingdom of Aksum. They are cultivators and have largely assimilated the language, culture, and religion of the Amhara and Tigray, although a few still speak their original Cushitic language. Some of the major Agew groups are the Bilen in Eritrea; the Kunfel, Qimant, and Felasha (Bete Israel, literally house of Israel) in Gonder; and the Awi in Gojam.

There are about 28,000 Felasha. They are Ethiopian natives who for centuries have practiced Jewish customs in spite of years of Christian-

led expeditions to convert them to Christianity. Their resistance to Christianity caused them to be pushed into less-productive areas in Gonder. Many earn a living by leasing land from their neighbors and by specializing as artisans. In 1975 the Felashas were officially recognized as Jews by the state of Israel, entitling them to Israeli citizenship and immigration under Israel's Law of Return.⁹ Schools and synagogues established by a Jewish rural development organization for the benefit of the Felashas were closed down in 1981 by the regional administrator of Gonder when the organization was accused of encouraging the Felashas to emigrate illegally to Israel.¹⁰ It is estimated that Israel clandestinely airlifted about 7,000 Felashas via Sudan, which was persuaded by the United States to permit the airlift. As the plight of the Felashas intensified as a result of the civil war and famine in Ethiopia, another clandestine airlift, code-named "Operation Moses," was launched in November 1984 and completed in March 1985 and brought 8,600 Felashas to Israel.¹¹

The People of the Lowlands

Along the Ethiopian-Sudan boundary are a cluster of ethnic groups, about 362,000 people, who speak the languages of the Nilo-Saharan family instead of the Afro-Asiatic languages spoken by other Ethiopian ethnic groups. These Nilo-Saharan-speaking groups are, from north to south, the Nara, Kunama, Gumuz, Berta, Anuak, and Nuer. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they suffered enslavement by both Ethiopians and Sudanese Arabs. Mainly because of their remote location, they are among the cultures least integrated into Ethiopian society. Almost all are sedentary cultivators who engage in fishing and herding.

In the northern region of Eritrea there are diverse groups of people, the largest of whom are the Muslim Beja. The Beni Amer are the largest of the Beja tribe and speak the Cushitic language Bedawie. The Beni Amer, who inhabit the border area adjoining the Sudan, are nomadic and seminomadic pastoralists and regularly cross into the Sudan. The eastern Beja group speak Tigre, a Semitic language closely related to Tigrinya. Along the Red Sea coast of the Rift Valley are the Muslim Saho. The Saho are nomadic herders who migrate seasonally to the plateau of Tigray and Eritrea. Most of the Saho are in Eritrea and speak Tigrinya, whereas the rest speak Saho, a Cushitic language. South of the Saho is the large tribal confederacy of the Afar, who are also called Danakil or Adal.¹² The Afar are Muslims and occupy one of the hottest and most barren regions in the world. They are nomadic herders except on the lower Awash River, where sedentary cultivators are found. Competition for vital but scarce resources, such as water and grazing, in the harsh environment of the Rift Valley has created hostility between

the Afar and surrounding people such as the Saho, Somali, and the Raya-Azebo.

South of the Afar are the Muslim Somali, who occupy a large part of the Somali peninsula. The Somali speak a Cushitic language by the same name and are divided into many ethnic groups and clans. The two major divisions are the Samali and Sab. The Samali, who predominate, consist of the major families of Dir, Gadabursi, Isak, Darod, and Hawiya. The Sab consist of the Digil, Rahanwein, and Tunni; they are found along the Juba Riber, where they are mainly cultivators. Among the major Somali groups in Ethiopia are the Ogaden of the Darod tribal family. All three peoples, the Saho, Afar, and Somali are very closely related, have traditions of common origin, and exhibit a basically common culture. Their conversion to Islam by the twelfth century created a state of hostility between them and the Christian kingdom of Ethiopia. Consequently, all three have been associated with ethnic separatist movements in Eritrea, the Afar region, and Ogaden.

POPULATION AND HEALTH

Based on the country's first national census, Ethiopia's population in 1984 was estimated at 42 million,¹³ which makes Ethiopia the third most populous country in Africa, after Nigeria and Egypt.

Population density is 34 persons per sq. km. (88 per sq. mi.). The plateau has a higher density (over 40 persons per sq. km., or 104 per sq. mi.), whereas the peripheral lowlands have a much lower density (below 20 persons per sq. km., or 52 per sq. mi.). The two densely populated administrative regions are Shewa and Arsi, in the center of the country, with densities of 111 and 68 persons per sq. km. (287 and 176 per sq. mi.), respectively (Table 5.1). The capital city and its numerous satellite towns account for Shewa's relatively high population density. Arsi's high population density is explained by its proximity to Shewa and by recent developments in transportation and commercial farms. On the other hand, large parts of the lowlands of Bale, Harerge, Welo, and Eritrea are sparsely populated.

The birthrate of Ethiopia, as in all developing countries, is very high, estimated at 41 births per 1,000 people annually for the period 1975–1984. Because strong traditional cultural values anchored in Christian and Islamic religions are prevalent in Ethiopia, there will not be a significant decline in the birthrate in the next few years. Children make up a large percentage of the total population. In 1982, children under ten years old made up about 33 percent, whereas all children under fifteen years old made up 45.5 percent of the population. Furthermore, there is no officially declared policy of population or family

Table 5.1
Population in 1984 (in thousands)

Province	Male	Female	Total	Density ² (per km.)
Arsi	823.8	838.4	1,662.2	67.6
Bale	497.1	508.4	1,006.5	7.8
Gemu Gofa	621.9	626.1	1,248.0	31.1
Gojam	1,622.0	1,822.9	3,244.9	50.4
Gonder	1,471.0	1,434.3	2,905.4	39.6
Eritrea ^a	1,347.2	1,356.8	2,704.0	23.0
Harerge	2,106.2	2,045.5	4,151.7	16.3
Ilubabor	472.6	490.7	963.3	19.0
Kefa	1,224.6	1,225.7	2,450.4	46.2
Shewa ^b	4,685.3	4,817.9	9,503.1	111.1
Sidamo	1,899.0	1,891.6	3,790.6	32.5
Tigray	1,210.8	1,189.9	2,409.7	36.7
Welega	1,168.9	1,200.8	2,369.7	33.9
Welo	1,788.8	1,821.2	3,609.9	45.7
Total	20,948.3	21,071.1	42,019.4	34.3

a Includes Aseb administration.

b Includes Addis Ababa.

Source: Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, Ethiopia 1984: Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report, Addis Ababa, September 1984.

Table 5.2
Ethiopia: Comparative Data on Health and Demographic Statistics, 1984^a

Statistics	Ethiopia	Low- Income Economies	Industrial Market Economies
Crude birth rate (per 1,000)	41	29	14
Crude death rate (per 1,000)	24	11	9
Life expectancy (years)	47	49	76
Infant (0-1 yrs) mortality rate	172	72	9
Total fertility rates	6.1	3.9	1.8
Average Annual population growth rate (1973-84)	2.8 ^b	2.0	0.7
Projected population (in millions for year 2000)	65	-	-
Urban population as % of total population	15	23	77

Source: IBRD, World Development Report, 1986.

a The World Bank has grouped countries into low-income economies (those with less than \$400 GNP), middle-income oil importers, high-income oil exporters, industrial economies, and nonmarket economies. See IBRD, World Development Report, 1984.

b The 1984 census gives a population growth rate of 2.9 percent.

planning, although there is a nongovernmental planning program in maternal and child care. The Voluntary Family Guidance Association, formed in 1966, operates clinics in Addis Ababa, and branches of the association furnish family planning services in over twenty centers outside the capital city. Figures from the Family Guidance Association indicate that the number of contraceptive acceptors had increased from 9,755 in 1970 to 75,319 in 1982,¹⁴ although this is insufficient to affect the national birthrate. There are also strong indications that the birthrate is higher in the rural areas than in the urban centers, but this is offset by higher infant and child mortality rates in rural areas, which suffer from a chronic shortage of health facilities.

The rate of mortality in Ethiopia, estimated at 26 per 1,000 in 1984, is one of the highest in Africa. The high mortality rate is a reflection of high infant mortality (172 per 1,000 in 1984) and low life expectancy (47 years in 1984). Thus, the high mortality rate slowed the rapid growth of the population. This is likely to change in the next few decades. The provision of basic health services (an objective of the military government) has had a significant impact in rapidly reducing infant mortality in developing countries. It is estimated that Ethiopia's population is growing at an average rate of 2.9 percent per annum. The World Bank projects Ethiopia's population growth at 2.7 percent per annum for the period 1980–2000, to reach a total of 65 million by the year 2000 (Table 5.2).

It is too early to fathom the consequences of the recent drought and famine for Ethiopia's demography, but it is clear that future population growth, distribution, and age-sex structure will be significantly altered by these events. It has been estimated that the war and drought have generated about 2 million refugees to neighboring countries and have displaced 1 million people. The military government has settled 600,000 people (out of a projected 1.5 million people) from drought-affected areas to more fertile regions in southwestern Ethiopia. In mid-1985 it was also estimated that about 300,000 died and another 8 million were threatened with starvation, with long-term consequences. It has been well documented that women on starvation diets very rarely conceive, and of those women who do conceive, many are so weakened by the famine that they and their babies may not survive the ordeal of childbearing. The few children that survive infant and child mortality may have both physical and mental impairments for the rest of their lives, as well as lowered life expectancy. Children accounted for about three-quarters of the deaths in refugee camps and feeding centers in Ethiopia.¹⁵ Demographers do not consider such reduction in population growth a blessing in disguise, because in the long run it tends to encourage families to produce more children as a hedge against future

natural calamities. High infant mortality is almost always associated with a high birthrate, and this demographic pattern will almost certainly be replicated in Ethiopia.

Health facilities are greatly biased in favor of the urban population. In the early 1970s, 48 percent of the doctors, 59 percent of the nurses, and 31 percent of the hospital beds in the entire country were found in Addis Ababa, the capital city, and most of the rest were found in Asmera, the second largest city. The military government is attempting to redress the imbalances by upgrading health conditions in rural areas with the participation of peasant associations. It is also encouraging urban dwellers' associations to participate in health programs to reach as many urban residents as possible. In order to promote the development of basic health services throughout the country, the Ministry of Health embarked in 1981 on the training of Community Health Agents (CHA) drawn from peasant and urban dwellers' associations. The training was designed to enable CHAs to identify and report outbreaks of major diseases and to provide instruction on nutrition, personal hygiene, control of communicable diseases, and community sanitation, especially the disposal of refuse, the digging of latrines, and the protection of water resources from contamination.¹⁶

As of 1983/84, Ethiopia had 85 hospitals, 141 health centers, 1,909 health stations, and 11,300 hospital beds. These health facilities were served by 539 doctors, 189 health officers, 1,930 nurses, and 8,100 paramedical personnel (pharmacists, sanitarians, health assistants, and technicians). Each health center is supposed to serve about 50,000 people, which would cover about 20 percent of the rural population. In addition to these health facilities, there are special institutions whose objectives are to control some of the major diseases that afflict the population, such as malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, venereal diseases, and trachoma.

Most health problems in Ethiopia are related to poor nutrition, lack of access to clean water, and a shortage of physicians and health facilities. For most of the population the per capita daily caloric supply is about 76 percent of daily requirements, and 40 percent of the population is considered malnourished, which renders them disease-prone. Less than 6 percent of the rural population has access to a safe water supply, hence the high incidence of diarrhea and amoebic dysentery. And because over half of the country lies more than 30 km. (19 mi.) from any type of road, inaccessibility deprives most of the rural population of even the minimum of health services.

Poor health conditions are an indicator of the low standard of living and pose a great challenge to the military government. The PMAC has set widely available, cheap medical care as its goal. The ten-year development plan envisages that health services will be made available

to 80 percent of the population by 1993/94.¹⁷ But opening up health delivery systems to more people without a corresponding increase in medical staff and facilities has already created problems even in the major urban centers, which have had better access to medical services than have rural areas. Patients have to trade price for waiting time and quality for quantity. For instance, in many of the hospitals in Addis Ababa, unless one has a serious condition that would warrant immediate access to the emergency room, one has to start lining up at the hospital before daybreak to receive an appointment number for the day. A prospective patient who arrived after all the numbers of the department had been given out would simply have to come back another day. Patients also have no choice over which doctor they see; consultation time is brief (three to five minutes); and they may feel concern over the variable quality of the health personnel who treat them. Doctors and health personnel complain about the lack of medicine and equipment, long hours of work, and hazardous assignments in remote parts of the country. Consequently, several Ethiopian doctors have left the country permanently for lucrative employment in Western Europe and North America, further compounding the health care situation in Ethiopia.

URBANIZATION

Large-scale urbanization in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon. Until about the end of World War II, less than 3 percent of the population was urbanized. By 1960, this figure had increased to 6 percent, and by 1984 to 15 percent. This low level of urbanization compared, in 1982, with 21 percent for other low-income economies and 78 percent for industrial market economies.

Although urbanization in Ethiopia is in an embryonic stage, three important factors are peculiar to the development of the country's urban areas.¹⁸ First, Ethiopian cities have grown at an average rate of 5.6 percent per annum during the decade 1973–1984, compared with 4.6 percent for all low-income economies. If this trend continues, it is possible that by the year 2000, over 25 percent of Ethiopia's population will live in urban areas. This high growth rate may be attributed to rapid population growth and the high rate of rural-urban migration.

Second, historically, the birth of new towns in Ethiopia was limited to the northern highland plateau. New towns have now emerged in the southern administrative regions, particularly in the coffee-growing areas, and along the Addis Ababa–Djibouti railway line. The development of a network of highways, the growth of coffee as a major cash crop, and the government's effort to establish new administrative and industrial centers are some of the factors responsible for the development of new

Table 5.3
Population Growth of Major Urban Areas, 1970-1984
(in thousands)

Urban Area	1970	1975	1984	% Change	
				1970-75	1975-84
Addis Ababa	795.5	1,120.5	1,412.6	40.9	26.1
Akaki	17.3	23.9	54.1	38.2	126.4
Arba Minch	6.7	7.7	23.0	14.9	198.7
Aseb	-	20.0	30.4	-	52.0
Asela	17.1	23.5	36.7	37.4	56.2
Asmera	218.4	301.6	275.4	38.1	8.7
Awasa	12.8	17.7	36.2	38.3	104.5
Bahir Dar	22.2	26.5	54.8	19.4	106.8
Debre Birhan	15.0	20.4	25.8	36.0	26.5
Debre Markos	27.2	32.4	39.8	19.1	22.8
Debre Zeyt	27.6	35.1	51.1	27.2	45.6
Dese	45.7	57.4	68.8	25.6	19.9
Dila	13.3	17.4	23.9	30.8	37.4
Dire Dawa	60.9	80.9	98.1	32.8	21.3
Goba	11.7	14.7	23.0	25.6	56.5
Gonder	35.3	44.4	69.0	25.8	55.4
Harer	45.0	56.4	62.1	25.3	10.1
Jima	41.8	52.1	61.0	24.6	17.1
Mekele	27.9	36.2	61.6	29.7	70.2
Nazret	39.4	51.3	76.3	30.2	48.7
Nekemte	16.1	22.5	28.8	39.8	28.0
Shashemene	11.8	16.4	31.5	40.0	92.1
Sodo (Welayta)	11.6	15.8	24.6	36.2	55.7

Source: 1970 & 1975: Central Statistical Office, Statistical Abstract, 1970,1975; 1984: Office of the Population and Housing Census Commission, Ethiopia 1984: Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report, Addis Ababa, September 1984.

Note: Cities with 1984 population of over 20,000--Jijiga (23,183), Keren (26,149), and Wonji (35,420)--are excluded from the table because of lack of comparable data for 1970 and 1975.

towns. Table 5.3 presents the growth of the major urban areas (those with a 1984 population of over 20,000) for the period 1970-1984. The most rapid growth has occurred in the relatively new towns, such as Arba Minch and Awasa, which are important agricultural and administrative towns, and in Bahir Dar and Akaki, two important industrial towns. These towns have more than doubled their populations since 1975. Arba Minch is a major agricultural center and Awasa is the newly designated capital of Sidamo, selected for its lakeshore site and convenient terrain on the Addis Ababa-Nairobi highway. Akaki is a suburb of Addis Ababa located on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line and has grown as a result of several food-processing and textile industries and a scrap-metal industry. Bahir Dar, located on the shores of Lake Tana near the scenic Tisisat Falls, is a newly planned town and is the site

of several industries and a polytechnic institute. Shashemene, Asela, Sodo, and Goba are some of the major agricultural and administrative centers that have experienced significant growth since 1975.

By comparison, many of the old regional capitals, such as Harer, Jima, and Dese, have not grown rapidly. Among the old towns, Mekele and Gonder are the only ones that have experienced major growth. Mekele is located in a drought-affected area and has been the site of a major feeding camp. The high figure for 1984 might have included migrants. The 1984 figure for Gonder includes Azezo, a small town 12 km. (8 mi.) from Gonder, whose population was not included in previous years' figures.

Third, the development pattern of urban areas has also changed since the early 1970s. Although urbanization in Ethiopia has been characterized by the dominance of one major city—notably Addis Ababa—many small towns have emerged in the last decade. For instance, in 1970 there were 171 cities with a population of 2,000 to 20,000; but by 1980 this figure had jumped to 229. At the same time, between 1970 and 1975, Addis Ababa and Asmera, the two largest cities, were growing rapidly. Since 1975, Asmera's growth has slackened because of the impending war in Eritrea (Table 5.3). In 1984 Addis Ababa, with a population of 1.4 million, accounted for 30 percent of the urban population, and Asmera, with a population of 275,400, accounted for another 6 percent. The growth of Addis Ababa and Asmera has been fueled by the concentration there of infrastructure and employment opportunities. In 1975/76 more than 75 percent of the communication services, 54 percent of the power capacity, and 38 percent of all-weather roads were concentrated in or around Addis Ababa and Asmera. A similar situation exists in 1987. The high concentration of resources in a few cities has had profound implications for national economic policy and social justice. A disproportionate share of the nation's resources is utilized to provide services to a small percentage of the national population.

The PMAC plans to redress the existing imbalances in infrastructure and other facilities by giving priority to small towns and rural areas. It has also created a bureaucratic system of control to help limit migration to urban areas. Urban areas are now organized into a hierarchy of associations (*kebeles*). Individuals have identity cards, and families living in urban areas have registration booklets that indicate the number of households and their members' sexes, ages, marital status, and so forth. Visitors coming to stay with the family must be reported to the *kebele* authorities. The information in the booklet is also used in a variety of ways—for instance, to register a child for school or to collect rations.

Despite the restrictive measures, urban areas are growing rapidly. Many of them are facing serious problems in the provision of services such as water and power and in providing adequate housing and employment. In a survey conducted by the author in 1975, it was found that one-third (29.5 percent) of the major urban areas did not have municipal water-supply services; of those that had such services, 56 percent indicated that water shortage was a serious problem. The survey also revealed that 11 percent of the urban areas did not have a power supply; of those that had power, 15 percent indicated that a power failure occurred at least once a week. Shortages of housing units and substandard housing were also reported as major problems.¹⁹ The government is simply not able to meet the rising demand. The housing crisis seriously affects the lives of many young urban families, who must also cope with a high rate of urban unemployment. Although the government's unprecedented expansion of secondary schools has created a "diploma fever," state enterprises are unable to generate enough jobs for the increasing number of graduates, thus creating an army of unemployed educated urban youth. In spite of government rhetoric, there is a growing sense of crisis in the urban areas and a growing disillusionment among the urban educated youth whose aspirations are frustrated.

EDUCATION

Until recently, education in Ethiopia focused primarily on religious learning. The country's long history of isolation and the excessive conservatism of the church contributed to a lack of interest in secular education. Since 1900, however, secular learning has been introduced under government sponsorship. Menelik II opened the first school in Addis Ababa in 1906 as part of his modernization program. A year later he issued a proclamation urging parents to send their children to school. At the time of his death in 1913, 4 schools were in operation—in Addis Ababa, Ankober, Dese, and Harer.²⁰

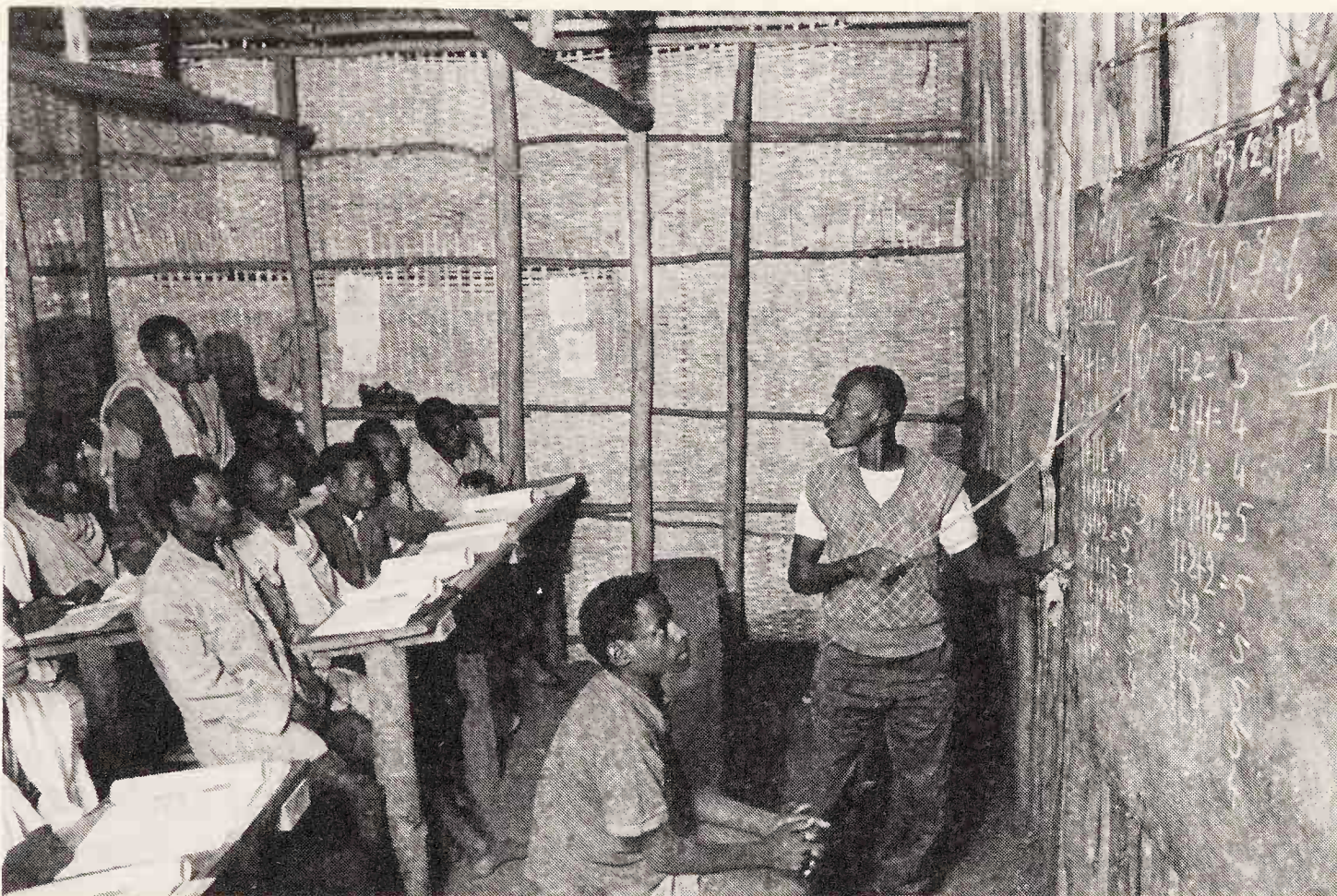
Menelik's successors, Lij Iyasu and Zewditu, who were engrossed in local political rivalry, had little impact on education. Modern education expanded under Haile Selassie, who encouraged parents to send their children to school. He founded new schools, recruited more teachers, imported teaching materials, sent young Ethiopians to study abroad, and served for many years as his own education minister. By 1935, on the eve of the Italian invasion, there were about 30 public schools with some 5,000 students. During the Italian occupation, 1935–1941, most schools remained closed.

The expansion of modern education accelerated after 1941. By 1953–1954, the system had 412 primary schools and 11 secondary schools, with an enrollment of about 62,000. Between 1950 and 1955, 6 degree-granting autonomous colleges were established that were later consolidated to form the Haile Selassie I University, now known as Addis Ababa University. But these developments were inadequate to meet the country's needs for trained personnel in government, agriculture, commerce, industry, and other sectors of the economy. Pressed by the rising demand for skilled personnel, the educational system concentrated on the production of a cadre of educated Ethiopians to run the modern administration and economy rather than on providing a nationwide literacy.

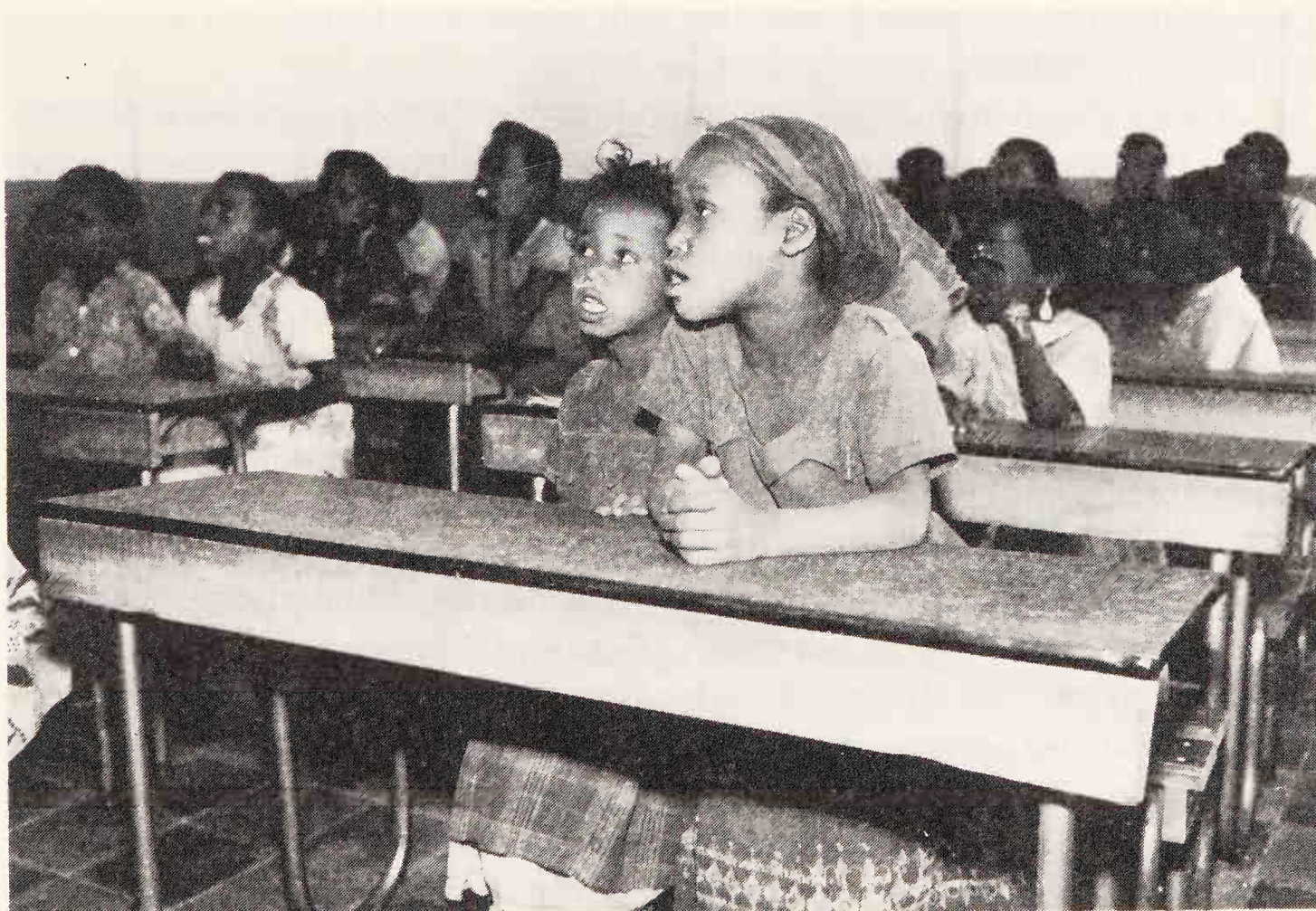
In 1961 a UNESCO conference on education in Addis Ababa revealed that Ethiopia had lagged behind many emerging African countries in education. An assessment of the educational system in Ethiopia concluded that it was characterized by serious shortages of schools, teachers, and teaching materials; in addition, less than 10 percent of school-age children attended school. Disturbed by this dismal assessment, the Haile Selassie government attempted to restructure the educational system. The new school system consisted of six years of primary education (grades 1–6), two years of junior secondary education (grades 7–8), four years of secondary education (grades 9–12), and four years of university education, a system that has survived to this day. Curriculum changes reflected a mix of both academic and technical-training programs. As a result, enrollment in elementary schools jumped from 7 percent of school-age children in 1960 to 16 percent in 1970, and enrollment in secondary schools rose from 0.4 percent to 4 percent.

The shortage of teaching personnel was met through expansion of the teacher training program and recruitment of foreign expatriate teachers. It is estimated that expatriates accounted for about 50 percent of the secondary school teachers in the late 1960s.²¹ Indians accounted for the largest number of expatriates. U.S. Peace Corps volunteers were also extensively used for teaching in high schools. An initially large but gradually reduced Peace Corps volunteers group was assigned to Ethiopia beginning in 1963. Between 1963 and 1977, about 2,500 volunteers served in Ethiopia in various programs. For instance, in May 1969, of a total of 442 volunteers, 165 taught in schools and universities, 89 worked in educational television, 63 taught English as a foreign language, and 125 worked in government agencies and for various urban and rural programs.²²

The educational system under the imperial government was characterized by several major problems. First, educational policy was selective and elitist. Second, the curriculum was exclusively academic with little



A literacy class in Weyebo Village of the Welamo-Sodo district, 1970. (United Nations/Nagata)



Children attending classes in 1975. (World Bank/Ray Witlin)

emphasis on vocational and technical programs, which meant little preparation for dropouts, who learned no marketable skills. Third, the system was urban biased. In addition, Ethiopia's educational system was not able to attract competent teachers nor was it able to provide adequate facilities for its students because of lack of funds. For instance, between 1968 and 1974, Ethiopia invested between 1.4 and 3 percent of its gross national product (GNP) on education. The comparative figures for most African countries were between 2.5 and 6 percent.

In 1971 the Haile Selassie government commissioned a group of experts to review the entire educational system. The commission presented its plans and recommendations in a document known as the Educational Sector Review (ESR). The recommendations called for universal education, inclusion of nonformal education to reach rural areas, limits on enrollment in high schools and university according to the personnel needs of the country, termination of state-funded education at the primary school level, and institution of a self-contained program at each level that would complete the educations of most students.²³ Opposition to the recommendation was immediate; it came from parents, students, and teachers. For many Ethiopians, particularly for those in the lower academic strata, the proposal appeared to deny them the opportunity for higher education and thereby perpetuate the elitist system. The most vocal group, the teachers' association, feared that the recommendation would result in loss of income and status to its members. The opposition intensified and the ESR became a factor in the demise of the Haile Selassie government in 1974.

Generally, many of the recommendations of the sector review were sound. But some groups used the document to incite opposition against the imperial government. Most reactions were premature and the merits of the recommendation were never adequately evaluated. With dialogue and revision, it had the potential to address some of Ethiopia's basic educational problems.

In 1975 the PMAC began to reform the educational system according to the socialist programs of the government. It nationalized all private schools excepting those with proven services to the community and those that had traditionally served children of the elite (e.g., St. Joseph School, Nazret School), most of which are church affiliated. Such schools were placed under the supervision of parent advisory committees and included as part of the public educational system. The school system is now organized much as it was before 1974; however, the new curriculum is based on "Marxism-Leninism" and places heavy emphasis on non-academic programs. Under the new policy, virtually all elementary school construction is supposed to be carried out directly by the community associations with material and technical advice provided by the Ministry

Table 5.4

Enrollment in Primary and Secondary Schools as Percentage of School-Age Group, 1970-1983

Year	E n r o l l m e n t	R a t i o
	Primary (6-11)	Secondary (12-17)
1970	16.0	4.0
1975	24.0	6.0
1976	25.0	8.0
1977	24.0	7.0
1978	29.0	9.0
1979	37.0	10.0
1980	43.0	11.0
1981	46.0	12.0
1982	46.0	12.0
1983	47.0	13.0

Source: IBRD, World Tables 1984 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1984), vol. 2, p. 30; World Development Report, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

of Education. *Kebeles* and peasant associations now have a say in the administration and control of primary and secondary schools. University education is under the Higher Education Commission, which is responsible for redefining the aims and objectives of higher education in the country. The PMAC has more than doubled the total number of schools, teachers, and teaching materials. For instance, between 1974/75 and 1982/83 the number of schools jumped from 3,300 to 7,676; the number of teachers increased from 26,969 to 51,500. It appears that part of the expansion resulted from rural and urban associations' self-help educational programs, because the government's educational expenditure as a percentage of total expenditure declined from 19 percent in 1974/75 to 10.6 percent in 1982/83.

Enrollments in both elementary and secondary schools have increased significantly, as indicated in Table 5.4. In 1970 only 16 percent of the elementary school-age group and 4 percent of the secondary school-age group attended school. By 1983 the enrollment figures had more than doubled to 47 and 13 percent, respectively. These increases were achieved by instituting a new two-shift and, in some cases, three-

shift attendance system. Critics argue that the quality of education has deteriorated to below prerevolution standards because of the lack of trained teachers, teaching materials, and schools. The system seems to emphasize nationwide education; it increases attainment levels without due consideration to quality. The rapid expansion of education has meant that poorly trained teachers had to be pressed into service. At the university level, attacks on intellectual elitism were mounted, particularly in the early days of the revolution, that frustrated many of the faculty as well as the students. Initially, university matriculation years were reduced to three, and class origin instead of academic excellence was to be a principal screening device for admission; fortunately, such policies were dropped after a few trials. The geared-down system of schooling may have quantitative success, but it will not avoid problems of poor quality, inadequate technical training and unemployment among high school and university graduates. As of 1987, no comprehensive assessment of the performance of the educational system was available.

One of the achievements of the military government is its program of adult literacy. The PMAC has set the objective of attaining universal literacy by the year 1993/94 (end of the ten-year plan), and in 1979 it launched a massive nationwide literacy program. It has succeeded in rallying local as well as international support for the program, in which over a million persons participated in 1979. The results were so impressive that in 1980 Ethiopia won UNESCO's annual literacy award. By 1982 Ethiopia had an overall literacy rate of about 17 percent; before the revolution it had been estimated at only 6 percent.²⁴ In higher education, over twelve schools and colleges offer degree programs in a variety of fields. University enrollment in 1981/82 reached 14,985, compared to about 4,000 in 1970/71. Some of the vocational, technical, and teacher training institutes in Addis Ababa, Bahir Dar, Asmera, Ambo, Jima, Nazret, and Debre Zeyt have expanded to help meet the personnel needs of the country.

Despite these achievements, the Ethiopian educational system still faces questions. How relevant is the curriculum to the needs of the country? Is the system capable of achieving nationwide literacy? Can educational growth be matched to the rate of economic development? What is the role of education in national integration? How well can the system reach rural areas, where over 85 percent of Ethiopia's population resides? These are major challenges facing the military government.

WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA

Anyone attempting to examine the role of women in Ethiopian society is quickly faced with the simple fact that very little hard research

has been done on the subject. According to Donald Crummey, "women must rank very high among the neglected themes of Ethiopian historical and social studies."²⁵ However, efforts are being made to remedy the situation, and a few articles that focus on some aspects of the role of women in Ethiopia have begun to appear since the 1970s.²⁶ The purpose of this section is to give a cursory look at the traditional situations of women in Ethiopia and to assess the impact of the revolution on them.

Traditional Position of Women

In Ethiopia, as in other countries of the Third World, women are burdened by sociocultural and economic discriminatory practices that, until recently, have been treated as though they were part of the natural scheme of things. Compared to men, women have had fewer opportunities for personal growth in education, employment, and professional and political life.²⁷ The traditional role of women in Ethiopia has been a difficult one, particularly in the rural areas, as illustrated by Richard Pankhurst.

Leaving aside the development of recent times, which affect only the small urban centers . . . the role traditionally ascribed to the Ethiopian women was both arduous and exacting. Unless she has had the good fortune to be of high rank, much of her work, like that of a beast of burden, consisted of carrying loads over long distances, or laboriously grinding corn on the basis of primitive technology. Like the rest of the population moreover, she suffered from poverty and disease, and for the most part did not even share the inadequate system of education available to her fathers, brothers and sons. For her as for the rest of the population, it can therefore be said that the Golden Age lay not in the Past, but in the Future.²⁸

After ten years of revolutionary rhetoric to improve their role and status, discrimination against women is still extensive because of traditional values and the sex-segregated character of Ethiopian society. In traditional societies such as Ethiopia, the personal worth of a woman lies in her role as wife and mother. Factors such as early marriage, the belief that the woman's place is in the home, and sex-stereotyped training prevent females from participating fully in national development. There are legal affirmations that acknowledge the rights of men over women. For instance, the Civil Code maintains that "the man is the head of the family," and ". . . the wife owes him obedience in all lawful things which he orders." Article 641 of the Civil Code maintains that the husband has the right to choose a common residence.²⁹ Rights concerning ownership of property and inheritance vary among the different ethnic

groups. For instance, among the Oromo, according to J. Spencer Trimingham, "the wife has few rights in Galla [Oromo] Law, she may not inherit. . . ." By contrast, among the Amhara, as Allan Hoben noted, "with regard to the ownership of land and moveable property and the right to institute divorce, the wife is very much the equal of her husband." Women in Tigray have similar rights.³⁰ Historically, however, even when women have held equal rights to inherit property, many failed to exercise these rights.³¹

With urbanization and modernization, some degree of differentiation has developed in the traditional role of women in the home and outside it. In the rural areas, most of the female work force is engaged in agriculture. Women not only have to do their share of subsistence farming, but they are also responsible for child care and housework, including fetching water and firewood, sifting and grinding of corn, cooking, brewing, and a host of other domestic services.

In urban areas, educational and occupational opportunities have provided some women with new roles outside the home, although their social position remains largely unchanged. In some areas, particularly in the job market, educated women have managed to fight their way into a traditional world of men. But inadequate skill and illiteracy forces many of them to take low-paying jobs as receptionists, telephone operators, and typists.

Women Since 1974

In revolutionary societies, two factors are often cited as central to the emancipation of women: the change in the economic relations of production and ownership of property and the attitude of men regarding women's role in society.³² With the enactment of the rural and urban land proclamation and the nationalization of industries and financial institutions, one would think that the PMAC has achieved the first precondition for the emancipation of women in Ethiopia. Zenebework Tadesse, although acknowledging that the land reform proclamation is progressive and democratic, argues that the proclamation "has failed to facilitate the transformation of the subordinate status of women."³³ There is some validity in her evaluation, but we must also consider that the land reform proclamation was primarily designed to abolish tenancy and private ownership in order to improve the conditions of peasants and was not specifically meant to alter the status of women.

The second factor, the transformation of the attitudes of men regarding women, has remained stubbornly unchanging despite the efforts of many organizations. A 1980 study on the status of women by the Swedish International Development Authority indicates that men agree that the participation of women in rural development is essential,



Women in the village of Godino harvesting chickpeas, 1976. (United Nations/Ray Witlin)

but they do not agree that women should be members of producers' cooperatives.³⁴ The PMAC is realizing that deep-rooted traditional values and beliefs cannot be eradicated with a stroke of the pen.

Nevertheless, women seem to have gained in some areas from the revolution. Women in Ethiopia are organized under the umbrella of the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association (REWA), which claims a membership of over 5 million. REWA has assumed responsibility for educating women and raising their levels of awareness so that they can exercise their rights as individuals. It has also encouraged the establishment of women's organizations in factories, local associations, and government offices. Politically, women have also begun to play major roles in various local organizations, including peasant and urban dwellers' associations. At the national level, however, their participation is limited. When the Workers' Party of Ethiopia was formed in September 1984, only one woman was selected as a full member of its Central Committee and two women as alternates. Of the 2,000 delegates that attended the Congress, only 6 percent were women.³⁵

One of the major programs of the revolution was the literacy campaign. In 1982, the government claimed that over 7 million people, of which 50 percent were women, had been taught to read and write.



More and more women are working in factories; this 1983 photo shows a worker inspecting a machine. (Photo courtesy of Assefa Alemayehu)

In primary and secondary schools, women's enrollment has shown a substantial increase since the revolution. In 1970, girls accounted for 10 percent of all students in primary schools and 2 percent of students in secondary schools; the corresponding figures for 1980 were 30 percent and 8 percent.³⁶

There are a number of areas in which changes would improve the quality of life of women. These include vocational training, day-care services, and the introduction of labor-saving devices to minimize arduous tasks. In addition, an important area worth examining is the employment status of women. Rural women are integrated into the rural economy in a variety of roles. On migrating to the urban areas, however, women find that opportunities to participate in productive activities are limited. For instance, a 1976 survey by the Central Statistical Office showed that 36.7 percent of the total employment in Addis Ababa, corresponding to 118,309 employees, were women. Women were employed in greatest concentration in the service sector (38.7 percent), followed by production and related works (24.8 percent), and sales (11.2 percent).³⁷ Most of those employed in the service sector were working in the big bars and hotels. The relatively large employment in production and related works,

such as textiles and food processing, is a sign of changing trends in professions normally reserved for men. Women's representation in high-paying and prestigious jobs, such as administrative, managerial, professional, and technical positions, was negligible.

Another problematic aspect of the employment structure of women is their rate of pay. A 1975 study by Gloria Lowenthal among women factory workers in Addis Ababa showed that women in general earned as little as a fourth of the pay of men for the same type of work.³⁸ A 1978 survey in seventeen major urban areas seemed to confirm Lowenthal's findings.³⁹ The survey indicated that the average monthly income of women employees was \$23, as compared to \$61 for men. The 1976 employment survey in Addis Ababa showed that 86 percent of women employees earned less than \$4.30 per week, and only 5 percent earned over \$48 per week. The corresponding figures for men were 58.8 and 8.9 percent, respectively. These differences in pay exist despite the 1975 proclamation on labor that stipulated equal pay for equal work for men and women.

These studies seem to suggest that, despite the rhetoric of the revolution, women in Ethiopia still have a long way to go before they can achieve parity with men, particularly in the job market. The revolution has enhanced the position of women, especially in the area of education. But Ethiopia's underdevelopment and its traditional prejudices against women persist as barriers to the full liberation of Ethiopian women. Many aspects of sexual inequality are still clearly visible—women earn less than men, they occupy fewer higher-status occupations and party positions, and they continue to perform most of the household chores, including the task of child care.

THE SOCIAL HIERARCHY: TRADITIONAL AND CHANGING CRITERIA

Ethiopia's population is ethnically, linguistically, and culturally diverse. But the multiplicity of the various ethnic and religious groups has not obscured the many shared customs and historical experiences, especially between the Amhara and Tigray and the Amhara and Oromo. The cultural and social contributions of many of these groups to the evolution of a multi-ethnic Ethiopian society is significant. At the same time the quest for power and influence increased social stratification by wealth (particularly based on landownership), greater disparity between rural and urban residents, distinction between the roles of males and females in society, and discrimination against minorities who engage in certain types of occupations. Prior to 1974 the types of land tenure were related to Ethiopia's social system. Land was not only a means of

livelihood but also was the source of status and power. The emperor, the nobility, and other major landlords occupied the highest position in the social hierarchy by their possession of special rights and authority over land. The millions of landless peasants who cultivated rented land were among the lowest in the social hierarchy. With the nationalization of urban and rural land and the dissolution of the imperial system, the privileged status and influence of big landowners was eliminated. Now members of the party hierarchy, ministers, military officers, and senior members of the bureaucracy exert political influence and enjoy economic perquisites that the defunct nobility and landlords once monopolized.

Social differentiation based on wealth, class, and power were always present in varying degrees in Ethiopia, but their bases began to change with education and urbanization. Change is more marked in urban areas, where a modern economy has forced increased social interaction among different unrelated ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups. A new class based on wealth, education, individual achievement, and access to political power has emerged. Education has played a major role in promoting social interaction among different groups. Large-scale, government-sponsored education in Ethiopia became an earnest endeavor only in the 1960s. By 1974 most of the bureaucracy and the modern economic sector was run by the educated group, who enjoyed a relatively higher status in society. The group also became a model demonstrating that education secures access to social mobility. The present government has made strides to expand education and has also taken the initiative to link school with production and community development and to strengthen cultural identity. Such efforts will accelerate interaction among the various ethnic groups. In rural areas, people usually live in fairly homogeneous groups, hence ethnic affiliation and provincialism are paramount.

Social stratification in Ethiopia is related to the status given to various occupations. Traditionally, the most preferred occupations have been those in government, the military, the clergy, and farming. Commerce and trade were less important and usually left to Muslims and foreigners. Occupations that have traditionally been despised include metal working, weaving, tanning, and pottery. People who specialized in these occupations formed caste groups and often occupied the lowest social strata. Some of these groups have included the Felasha in Gonder, the Fuga in Gurage, and the Tumtu and Watta in Harer. There is a myth that these caste groups have supernatural powers and believed to practice magic and witchcraft. They suffer the stigma of having evil eyes and of eating meat of animals that are proscribed by both Christians and Muslims. Hence, these caste groups are held in low esteem and have

often been treated as subjects of the dominant group in their respective areas.

Social stratification based on sex is another major characteristic of Ethiopian society. Women in Ethiopia, particularly rural women, still remain short of achieving parity with men, particularly in determining their own destinies. Except in rare circumstances, women traditionally did not exercise public power. Women do most of the housework, tend babies, and manage the hearth. Education has begun to reduce some of the blatant discrimination against women, and one of the stated objectives of the present government is to eliminate such discrimination. Unfortunately, old customs and beliefs persist, and it will be a while before Ethiopian women can enjoy the same privileges and status in society as do Ethiopian men.

LITERATURE, ART, AND MUSIC

Ethiopian literature, art, and music are as diverse as the eighty-odd dialects spoken in various parts of the country. No comprehensive collection and cataloging of folktales, sagas, and poems exists, but a general survey of major Ethiopian works may be made from available sources.⁴⁰

Literature

What may be referred to as “classical literature” in Ethiopia is mostly in Geez (Ethiopic), the ancient Ethiopian language dating back to the Aksumite period. Geez literature contains many works that were translated from Syriac, Arabic, Greek, and Hebrew. The major themes of these works were theology, philosophy, law, history, and hagiology. Some examples are *Metshafe Birhan* (Book of Lights), *Fetha Negest* (Legislation of the Kings), *Kibre Negest* (Glory of Kings—chronicles of Ethiopian kings and emperors), and *Metshafe Bahriy* (Book of Theosophy).

Many of the literary works attributed to the Aksumite period were translations from Greek. Major works from this time include a translation of the scriptures; *Rules of Pachomius*, concerned with monastic life; and the *Physiologus*, a collection of information on plants and animals. No literary works from the Zagwey dynasty (1137–1270) have survived.⁴¹

The flowering of Geez literature began with the restoration of the Solomonic dynasty in 1270. The reigns of Amde Sion (1314–1344) and Zara Yakob (1434–1468), a period also known as the Golden Age of Geez, are known for major literary works such as *Weddase Maryam* (Praises of Mary), *Fekkare Yesus* (Explications of Jesus), *Metshafe Birhan*, and *Kibre Negest*.

Ethiopian literary work suffered a setback as a result of two historical factors. The first was the Gragn invasion. During the period 1506 to 1543, when many of the churches and the monasteries were destroyed by Gragn's army, some important manuscripts perished. Second, the early foreign expeditions took many valuable tomes from monastery libraries. According to Edward Ullendorff, the number of Ethiopian manuscripts in Europe, in public libraries as well as privately owned, is considerable. The Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris now possesses the richest collection—a grand total approaching 1,000 manuscripts. The British Museum has some 550 manuscripts, most of them acquired during the Magdala expedition in 1868. The Vatican Library is also in possession of some 250 manuscripts. Many manuscripts are dispersed in Berlin, Leipzig, Vienna, and Leningrad.⁴²

Geez remained the medium of ecclesiastical and literary expression but, by the sixteenth century, gradually gave way to Amharic. Amharic, also known as *Lesane Negest* (Language of Kings), was spoken at the royal court and began to be used for literary purposes at the beginning of the nineteenth century. During the reign of Tewodros (1855–1868), the royal chronicles were written in Amharic. Both Tewodros and Yohannes used Amharic to conduct their royal correspondence. Although the translation of the Bible into Amharic was made early in the nineteenth century, materials written in Amharic began to appear and circulate widely only after the importation of a printing press from Europe by Emperor Menelik II. In 1910 the first weekly newspaper, *Aemero*, was published. Amharic literature flourished until the interruption by the Italian invasion of 1935. Some prominent writers of this period were: Aleka Taye, author of *Yethiopia Hizb Tarik* (The History of Ethiopian People); Afework Gebre-Yesus, author of *Libewoled Tarik* (Fiction), *Topiaw* (after its main character), and *Dagmawi Menelik* (Menelik II); Gebre Heywot Baykedagn, author of *Mengistena Yehizb Astedader* (Government and Public Administration); and Bilatengeta Hiruy Wolde Selassie, author of *Wedaje Libe* (My Friend, My Heart) and *Addis Alem* (New World).

During the Italian invasion (1935–1941), literary work ceased; it resumed only after 1941, when a number of works based on the Italian experience as well as those that addressed the social and political life of the people were published. Whereas Geez literature was mostly religious, most Amaharic writers dealt with secular life. Some of the important post-World War II writers were: Yoftahe Negussie, Ras Bitweded Makonnen Indalkachew, Girmachew Teklehawaryt, Kebede Michael, Blata Mersae-Hazen Wolde Kirkos, Tekle Tsadiq Mekuria, Mahteme Selassie Wolde Meskel, Tsegaye Gebre Medhin, Mengistu Lemma, Haddis Alemayehu, Abe Gobegna, and Birhanu Zerihun.



A wedding ceremony, performed by Ethiopian artists, March 1987. (Photo courtesy of Yohannes Haileyesus)

With the 1974 revolution and the adoption of socialism as the state ideology, several translations of Marxist literature were produced. In 1982 the PMAC established the Academy of Ethiopian Languages (the National Academy of the Amharic Language was established in 1972), which was made responsible for the promotion of language and literature in Ethiopia. The academy has published a series of English-Amharic glossaries of scientific and technical terms that will eventually be consolidated into a dictionary. *Oromay*, a satirical study of the roles of various individuals in political power, was written by Baalu Girma, former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Information. He later disappeared (believed to be killed), allegedly for his literary work.

Painting

Painting on parchment, wood, and canvas is an old tradition in Ethiopia. Early paintings included manuscript illumination and church decorations. Most of these were religious in both purpose and subject matter. Although the earliest paintings, such as manuscript illustrations, were believed to be Byzantine in origin, paintings made in the sixteenth

and seventeenth centuries show Western influences, perhaps because of several Western painters who are known to have lived in Ethiopia around that time.

Modern painting, following Western style, developed only after World War II. Among contemporary artists are Afework Tekle, Gebre Kristos Desta, and Skunder Boghossian. These artists have successfully integrated traditional painting with modern art, and their works have received national and international recognition.

Music

Like many elements of Ethiopian culture, indigenous music and musical instruments show a rich mix of both African and Near Eastern influences. Yet, as a result of the relatively long period of isolation from the rest of the world, Ethiopian music has developed a distinctive character of its own.

Church music traces its beginnings to St. Yared, a musical genius who lived in the sixth century. According to the Ethiopian *Senkesar* (synaxarium), Yared invented the notational system for *zema*, a liturgical chant. The three modes, known as *Geez*, *Ezel*, and *Araray*, were composed for various occasions. Following Yared, during the reign of Gelawdewos (1540–1559), Azazh Gera and Azazh Raguel developed a notational system for the *deggua* (mass).

Training in church music is offered through traditional schools in four major stages. The first stage is the *Zema Bet* (School of Music), where the student has to study the vast collection of hymns used for different seasons of the year. The second stage is the *Aquaquam Bet* (School of Dance), where the student learns about the rhythmical accompaniments used in church dances. The third stage is the *Kene Bet* (School of Poetry), where the student studies composition of poems for use in church services. The final stage is *Meshaf Bet* (School of Books), where the student learns interpretation of verses.

Secular music has as rich a heritage. Depending on the setting, the melody of folk songs (and the dance that often accompanies it) varies. *Zeffen*—sung at weddings, religious festivals, group work, and so forth—deal with the daily lives of people; *fukera* and *shilela* (patriotic songs) are songs expressing a warrior's accomplishments; *leqso* and *musho*, which express sorrow, are compositions and eulogies performed at funeral ceremonies.

Modern secular music displays elements of both traditional and Western musical styles. Although traditional folk songs are often sung by one or two *azmari* (minstrels) using traditional instruments—such as *masinko* (a single-string fiddle), *kirar* (harp), *washint* (flute), and *kebero* (drum)—modern songs are performed by bands, often equipped with

a mix of traditional and modern instruments. On Ethiopia's New Year's Eve (celebrated on September 10; the Ethiopian calendar is seven years and eight months behind the European calendar), new songs composed during the year are introduced, a tradition believed to have been started in 1948. The National Theatre and the Yared School of Music are two of the major institutions at which aspiring artists may receive professional musical training.

SUMMARY

Most of the Ethiopian highland plateau is inhabited by the Amhara, Tigray, and Oromo, three major ethnic groups that account for about 86 percent of Ethiopia's population. For centuries, the Amhara and Tigray dominated the political and cultural milieu of the country. With the incorporation of numerous ethnic groups, particularly during the reign of Menelik II, the ethnic composition of Ethiopia changed dramatically. In 1970 it was estimated that there were over eighty ethnic groups speaking over seventy languages and hundreds of dialects.

The 1984 census placed Ethiopia's population at 42 million and growing at an average annual rate of 2.9 percent. About 46 percent of the population is under age fifteen, whereas those over sixty-four years of age constitute about 5 percent, which means that about 51 percent of the population is dependent. The social and economic implication of such a demographic structure is that less than half of the population must support the remaining majority, a great burden to bear in a rudimentary economy.

Christianity and Islam are the two major religions, although traditional belief systems are found interspersed among such groups as the Gurage, Oromo, and Sidama. Ethiopia has traditionally been identified with Orthodox Christianity, an association that was nurtured by Ethiopia's emperors. Islam is the faith of about 40 percent of the country's population, but Christianity was the only state religion until the 1974 revolution, when the government gave all religions equal status vis-à-vis the state. Religion has always played an important role in the daily lives of the people. (In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the younger generation, especially those with modern educations, began to question the compatibility of the old religious attitudes with rapid economic development. This process accelerated after the 1974 revolution and subsequent waning of the influence of the church.)

The ethnic and cultural diversity brought about by centuries of contact among the different groups still continues. Changing social and political conditions have attenuated traditional social ties. Under the

philosophy of Ethiopian socialism, all ethnic groups are expected to be on an equal footing.

Despite the Haile Selassie government's emphasis on improving health and education, its efforts were still small and the facilities available too few to be significant. By the early 1970s it was clear that existing educational and health systems were inadequate for the needs of the country. In 1970 only about 6 percent of the population was literate, and a high incidence of debilitating and sometimes fatal disease was common, reflecting poor health services and poor nutrition. In 1979 the PMAC launched a major policy aimed at introducing changes in the educational system and providing primary health care throughout the country with emphasis on preventive medicine. The educational system was reorganized according to the socialist programs of the government. The PMAC has also pledged to expand health services and to correct the inadequate and distorted distribution of medical personnel and facilities, which are concentrated in urban areas, notably Addis Ababa.

An important aspect of the changing structure of Ethiopian society is rural-urban migration, which has accelerated in the last decade. Ethiopian cities are growing at an average rate of 5.6 percent per annum, compared with 4.6 percent for all low-income economies. Addis Ababa, with a 1984 population of 1.4 million, has almost doubled its 1970 population. The burgeoning growth has strained urban services such as water, power, and public transportation, although housing is perhaps the most pressing problem. The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing's estimate of housing needs for the period 1980–1985 for Addis Ababa was 7,000 units per year just to ease overcrowding.

A consequence of rapid urbanization is a growing homogeneity of the society. Although kinship relations are still important, as in the villages, an increase in interethnic relations has been brought about by urban life. City expansion has produced a wealth of opportunities for shopkeepers, small entrepreneurs, and professionals. But these opportunities vary for men and for women. Women in urban areas have better opportunities in education and health services compared to women in rural areas, but their representation in high-paying and prestigious jobs is still negligible.

NOTES

1. For a general survey of language and ethnic groups, see Marvin L. Bender et al., eds., *Language in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976); Wolf Leslau, "The Languages of Ethiopia and Their Geographic Distribution," *Ethiopia Observer* 2:3 (February 1958), pp. 116–121; Donald Levine, *Greater Ethiopia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Edward Ullendorff, *The*

Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People, 3rd edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952); J.F. Simoons, *Northwest Ethiopia: Peoples and Economy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960).

2. Bender, *Language in Ethiopia*, pp. 15–16.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

4. Enrico Cerulli, *Peoples of South-west Ethiopia and Its Borderland*, Ethnographic Survey of Africa: North Eastern Africa, Part III (London: International African Institute, 1956), p. 85. The term *sidama* means “stranger” in Oromo, and according to Trimingham it is used by the Oromo to refer to all non-Oromo peoples. Some linguists object to the use of Sidama (first used by Cerulli) to refer to the language groups around the Omo River. See Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, p. 179; Harold C. Fleming and Marvin L. Bender “Non-Semitic Languages,” in Bender, *Language in Ethiopia*, pp. 35–39.

5. For more on the Oromo, see G.W.B. Huntingford, *The Galla of Ethiopia: The Kingdoms of Kefa and Janjero*, Ethnographic Survey of Africa: North Eastern Africa, Part II (London: International African Institute, 1955); Herbert Lewis, “The Origins of the Galla and Somali,” *Journal of African History* 7:1 (1966), pp. 27–46.

6. See Asmerom Legesse, *Gada: Three Approaches to the Study of African Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

7. Cerulli, *Peoples of South-west Ethiopia and Its Borderland*, pp. 85–132.

8. For more on the Gurage, see William A. Shack, *The Gurage: A People of the Ensete Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966).

9. In 1972 Israel’s chief Shephardi rabbi ruled the Felashas to be a remnant of the “Lost Tribe of Dan,” which is considered to have disappeared from history 2,700 years ago. Ethiopianist scholars Mordechai Abir and Edward Ullendorff dismiss the rabbi’s allegations. Abir considers the Felashas as “cushitic people who accepted some part of Jewish beliefs,” and Ullendorff considers them “adhere to fossilized Hebraic-Jew beliefs.” See Louis Rapaport, *The Lost Jews: Last of Ethiopian Falashas* (New York: Stein and Day, 1980), pp. 86 and 93.

10. *New York Times*, April 12, 1982, p. B3.

11. Israel has not released the actual numbers for Felashas settled there. For estimates see the *Washington Post*, January 4 and 6, 1985; *Newsweek*, January 14, 1985, p. 51, and *Africa Report*, May-June 1985, p. 39.

12. I.M. Lewis, *Peoples of the Horn of Africa: Somali, Afar and Saho*, Ethnographic Survey of Ethiopia: North Eastern Africa, Part I (London: International African Institute, 1955); George Savard, *The Peoples of Ethiopia*, 3 vols. (Addis Ababa: Haile Selassie I University, 1970).

13. Ethiopian Government, Office of Population and Housing Census Commission, *Population 1984: Population and Housing Census Preliminary Report* (Addis Ababa, September 1984).

14. Cited in World Bank, *Ethiopia: Recent Economic Development and Future Prospects*, vol. 2, May 31, 1984 (Report No. 4683Q-ET), Table 10.2, p. 189.

15. *Newsweek*, “We Are the Children,” June 3, 1985, p. 28.

16. *Ethiopian Herald*, March 7, 1982, p. 2.

17. Workers' Party of Ethiopia, *Guidelines on the Economic and Social Development of Ethiopia, 1983/84-1993/94*, September 1980, p. 89 (unofficial translation).

18. For a general discussion on urban development in Ethiopia, see Mulatu Wubneh, *A Spatial Analysis of Urban-Industrial Development in Ethiopia* (Syracuse: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, 1982).

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-163.

20. For a historical assessment of the development of education in Ethiopia, see Teshome G. Wagaw, *Education in Ethiopia: Prospect and Retrospect* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979), and Girma Amare, "Education in Ethiopia," in A. Babs Fafunwa and J.U. Aisiku, eds., *Education in Africa: A Comparative Survey* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982). A series of articles on education in Ethiopia also appears in Bender, *Language in Ethiopia*, part 3; see articles by J. Donald Bowen, Richard K.P. Pankhurst, Haile Woldemikael, and Haile Gebriel Dagne.

21. J. Donald Bowen, "Teacher Training and Problems of Staffing the Schools," in Bender, *Language in Ethiopia*, p. 464.

22. Robert G. Grey, *The Peace Corps* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 143-145. John Cohen maintains that U.S. Peace Corps volunteers accounted for nearly half the secondary school teachers in the mid-1960s, a figure that has no basis. Bowen's figures, based on Ministry of Education data, show that Peace Corps volunteers accounted for 13.5 percent of the secondary school teachers for the period 1967-1969. See Bowen, "Teacher Training and Problems of Staffing the Schools," Table 4, p. 465, and John Cohen, "Foreign Involvement in the Formulation of Ethiopia's Land Tenure Policies: Part I," *Northeast African Studies* 7:2 (1985), p. 39.

23. Ministry of Education and Fine Arts, *Education: A Challenge to the Nation*, Addis Ababa, 1973.

24. The government claims that the literacy rate is 53 percent, a figure disputed by many, including Schwab, who believes that the probable literacy rate is 17 percent. See Peter Schwab, *Ethiopia: Politics, Economics and Society* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1985), p. 89.

25. Donald Crummey, "Women and Landed Property in Gondarine Ethiopia," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14:3 (1981), p. 444.

26. For some of the works on women, see Alasebu Gebre Selassie, comp., *Women and Development in Ethiopia: An Annotated Bibliography* (Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa, 1981, ST/ECA/ATRCW/81/27).

27. See Salome Gebre Egziabher, "The Changing Position of Women in Ethiopia," *Zeitschrift fur Kulturaustausch* (Sonderausgabe 1973), pp. 112-115; Judith Olmsted, "Women and Work in Two Southern Ethiopia Communities," *African Studies Review* 18:3 (1975), pp. 85-98; Laketch Dirasse, "The Socioeconomic Position of Women in Addis Ababa: The Case of Prostitution," Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1978.

28. Richard Pankhurst, "The Ethiopian Women in Former Times: An Anthology," Paper presented for the International Women's Year Anniversary Exhibition at Revolutionary Square, Addis Ababa, 1976, p. 25 (mimeographed).

29. "Civil Code of Ethiopia," *Negarit Gazetta* 19:2 (1960); see articles 635, 641, and 647. There are customary laws that are recognized by courts that seem to conflict with the Civil Code. For instance, among Muslims the right to grant divorce is given only to the husband under the Sharia (the religious law of Muslims). For more on the legal status of women, see Daniel Haile, *Law and the Status of Women in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Economic Commission for Africa, 1980).

30. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia*, pp. 144 and 153; Allan Hoben, *Land Tenure Among the Amhara of Ethiopia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 83. See also Dan Fray Bauer, *Household and Society in Ethiopia: An Economic and Social Analysis of Tigray Social Principles and Household Organizations*, Monograph No. 6, Occasional Paper Series (East Lansing: African Studies Center, Michigan State University, 1977).

31. Crummey, "Women and Landed Property in Gondarine Ethiopia," p. 465.

32. Bee-Lan Chan Wang concludes, based on Frederick Engels' work on the family, that with the nationalization of land and other means of production, women can participate as equals with men in socially productive work. See "Chinese Women: The Relative Influences of Ideological Revolution, Economic Growth, and Cultural Change," in Beverly Lindsay, ed., *Comparative Perspective of Third World Women: The Impact of Race, Sex and Class* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 99.

33. Zenebework Tadesse, "The Impact of Land Reform on Women: The Case of Ethiopia," in *Women and Development: The Sexual Division of Labor in Rural Societies*, edited by Loudres Baneria (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 204.

34. Eva Poluha, "A Study in Two Ethiopian Woredas on the Economic Activity of Peasant Women and Their Role in Rural Development" (Addis Ababa: Swedish International Development Authority, 1980).

35. *Africa Confidential* 25:19 (September 1984), p. 2.

36. IBRD, *World Tables 1984*, 3rd edition, vol. 2 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1984), p. 30.

37. Central Statistical Office, *Addis Ababa Manpower and Housing Sample Survey, December 1976*, Statistical Bulletin No. 15, Addis Ababa, 1977, p. 18.

38. Gloria Lowenthal, "Women Factory Workers in Ethiopia," Addis Ababa, 1975 (manuscript).

39. Central Statistical Office, *Population, Labor Force and Housing Characteristics of Seventeen Major Towns*, Statistical Bulletin No. 27, Addis Ababa, August 1980, p. 271.

40. For a general work on literature, music, and art, see Ministry of Information, *Ethiopia Today: The Arts* (Addis Ababa: Commercial Printing Press, 1973); Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*; Irving Kaplan et al., *Area Handbook for Ethiopia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), chapter 10; Michael Powne, *Ethiopian Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); and Ashenafi Kebede, "Musical Innovation and Musical Acculturation in Ethiopia," *African Urban Studies*, no. 6 (Winter 1979-1980), pp. 77-88.

41. Kaplan, *Area Handbook for Ethiopia*, p. 209.

42. Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 142.

6

International Relations

Haile Selassie set the tone for Ethiopia's international relations.¹ He was involved in foreign policy as early as 1923, when, during his regency, Ethiopia was admitted to membership in the League of Nations. On June 30, 1936, during the Fascist invasion of Ethiopia, the emperor appealed to the League membership to honor its pledge of collective security, but to no avail. His prophetic statement that the League's failure to uphold its covenant in the face of Fascist aggression would undo the organization did in fact come to pass when Hitler unleashed his invasion of Europe in 1939. These historical events, and the emperor's return to his throne in 1941, gave him a strong international profile, which he cultivated through state visits to many parts of the world. According to John H. Spencer, "Haile Selassie's interest in foreign affairs and direct foreign contact was an obsession."² He engaged in personal diplomacy as mediator in various African disputes—between Algeria and Morocco in 1963, in the Nigerian civil war in 1968–1969, and in the Sudanese civil war in 1972. The emperor's profile generally enhanced Ethiopia's international image.

Ethiopia's foreign relations were facilitated by several seasoned Ethiopian diplomats, the most prominent of whom was Aklilu Haptewold, who as deputy and later as foreign minister conducted the details of Ethiopia's international affairs. The conduct of foreign affairs was free of constraints from other branches of government and from traditional constituents such as the church and the nobility, for whom foreign policy was too esoteric and complex. It was also generally free of bureaucratic procedures and interference from interminable committees—hallmarks of domestic governance—and thus the minister of foreign affairs was permitted relative freedom to pursue Ethiopia's objectives.³

As most African countries were under colonial rule prior to 1955, Ethiopia's foreign policy was dominated by its relations with the West, primarily Great Britain, France, Italy (countries that administered territories surrounding Ethiopia), and the United States. After the wave of

decolonization beginning in 1956, Ethiopia's attention turned toward African countries and the Arab world. As the leader of one of the oldest independent nations in the world, the emperor recognized the symbolic role Ethiopia played in African nationalism and was determined to play a leading role in African affairs. He reconciled different African factions and blocs, which led to the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 and the selection of Addis Ababa as its permanent headquarters. The emergence of the emperor as a respected elder statesman in Africa was a testimony to his contribution to African affairs. With the emergence of the Third World, the official foreign policy line shifted from pro-Western to one of nonalignment, although the emperor's sympathies still lay with the West. He was a strong supporter of the United Nations, especially on issues of collective security, peace-keeping, and decolonization, despite betrayal by the League of Nations in 1935. He sent Ethiopian troops to Korea in 1951–1954 and to Zaire (Congo) in 1960–1964—in both cases, as part of UN forces—to affirm his commitment to collective security.

Since its liberation in 1941, Ethiopia has had four major foreign policy objectives. The first of these has been to find a major power that would provide Ethiopia with economic and military aid. The decline of Great Britain, with which Ethiopia has had a long-standing historical link, British appeasement of Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, and the British proposal for "Greater Somalia" all militated against reliance on that country. In addition, the heavy-handed British military administration in Ethiopia in the early 1940s and British diplomatic intrigue concerning the future of the Ogaden and of Eritrea served to heighten the emperor's suspicions about British motives in Ethiopia. The Anglo-Ethiopian agreement of 1942 virtually placed Ethiopia under British military administration. Although the agreement was renegotiated in 1944, giving Ethiopia more independence, the emperor wanted to free his government from British dominance.

The United States was sympathetic to the Ethiopian plight under the British and revealed interest in assuring the country's independence. According to John Spencer, "President Roosevelt viewed the sweeping controls which Britain claimed over Ethiopia as being inconsistent with the Atlantic Charter and the Declaration of the United Nations."⁴ The emperor felt that the United States, unlike Great Britain, had no design on Ethiopia and could be counted to provide Ethiopia with economic and military aid. Thus, U.S. support of Ethiopia's independence provided the emperor with leverage against British domination. The United States declared Ethiopia eligible for lend-lease (a program the United States used during World War II to provide allies with war materials and supplies) in 1943 and soon after sent a large economic assistance mission

to survey the country's economic, agricultural, and mineral potential. These developments paved the way for close U.S.-Ethiopian relations. The emperor met President Roosevelt in Egypt in 1945, and Ethiopia started receiving U.S. aid in the late 1940s.

The second foreign policy objective was to gain direct access to the sea by preventing foreign control of coastal areas. Thus, Ethiopia claimed both Eritrea and Somaliland on historical, ethnic, and geopolitical grounds.⁵ The claim to Somaliland was rejected, but the UN General Assembly recommended that Eritrea be federated with Ethiopia for ten years beginning in 1952.

The emperor played a leading role in efforts to realize both foreign policy objectives. His refusal to surrender the Ogaden to the British in the 1940s, his determination to press for the return of Eritrea, his relentless search for a direct access to the sea, his faith in the United States, and his commitment to collective security were primary factors guiding Ethiopia's international relations until the early 1960s.

Ethiopia's third foreign policy objective has been to minimize the impact of Arab nationalism on Ethiopian foreign and domestic affairs. Ethiopia has had difficulty with Arab nationalism, whose objective is Arab unity, which in Ethiopia means Islamic unity. As the only non-Arab and non-Islamic nation in the region, Ethiopia became a target of the Pan-Arab movement. The Egyptian revolution in 1952, under Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, the independence of the Sudan in 1956, the Yemeni revolution in 1962, and Somali claims to the Ogaden revived Ethiopian anxiety of Muslim "encirclement." Since the unification of Eritrea and Ethiopia in 1962, Arab countries have supplied arms and money to Eritrean separatist movements. The emperor maintained friendly contacts with the leaders of many Arab countries, such as kings Saud and Faisal of Saudi Arabia, presidents Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and all the Sudanese leaders, which helped mute Arab propaganda for the secession of Eritrea and for a "Greater Somalia."⁶

The fourth of Ethiopia's foreign policy objectives has been active involvement in African affairs. Ethiopia has always enjoyed good relations with sub-Saharan African countries. The emperor championed African independence and was host to many Pan-African conferences. Ethiopia received strong African support to contain Somali irredentism and Eritrean secessionism because most African countries believe that a successful ethnic-based separatist movement in one African country could encourage others on the continent. Ethnic-based separatist movements are considered destabilizing and, therefore, anathema to Pan-Africanism.

On September 12, 1974, the PMAC proclaimed its intention to pursue a nonaligned foreign policy, to respect its international obligations,

and to strengthen ties with all African countries, in particular with Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Egypt.⁷ Since 1977, the government has conducted its international relations in close cooperation with the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and Cuba and has actively participated in the OAU and the conferences of nonaligned countries. Although many countries have condemned the PMAC for its poor record in the area of human rights, it has received widespread support from African countries and the world community on issues of territorial integrity, based primarily on the UN and OAU charters.

NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND THE ARAB WORLD

Somalia

Of all its neighbors, Ethiopia has had the most difficult relationship with Somalia. The two countries engaged in full-scale wars in 1964 and in 1977–1978, with frequent border skirmishes and Somali guerrilla raids. The bone of contention between the two neighbors has been Somalia's desire to annex the Ogaden, a Somali-inhabited territory in southeastern Ethiopia. Since 1960, successive Somali governments have made a constitutional pledge to unite Somalis in the Horn of Africa and have demanded a border revision based on self-determination for ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Djibouti. Ethiopia has considered self-determination to be an infringement on its sovereignty. Throughout 1961 Ethiopian-Somali relations were strained, as hostile propaganda and border skirmishes intensified between the two countries, erupting into open war in 1964. Both countries later agreed to withdraw their troops from the border under the supervision of a joint Ethiopian-Somali cease-fire commission. However, minor skirmishes and hostile propaganda continued between Somalia and its two neighbors, Ethiopia and Kenya. In September 1967, a new Somali government under Prime Minister Mohammad I.H. Igal declared that Somali unification was to be pursued by peaceful and legal means, because the aggressive policy of previous governments against its neighbors had "succeeded in creating a false image of the Somali Republic . . . in making the world believe that the Somali Republic nourishes expansionist ambitions."⁸ This policy was realistic, considering the economic and military superiority of Somalia's antagonists and Somalia's isolation from most African countries, who find Pan-Somalism inconsistent with Pan-Africanism. At the OAU summit conference in Cairo in 1964, member states pledged to respect the borders inherited with national independence, a resolution that Somalia refused to accept.

Peaceful relations between Somalia and Ethiopia continued until 1969, when the Somali government was overthrown by the military. The new leader, General Siad Barre, in reference to Somalia's relations with its neighbors, said, ". . . we are determined as ever to come together with our friends at a round-table conference to reach solutions honorable and satisfactory for all."⁹ However, by 1974 Somalia had raised a well-trained army of 32,000 and had signed a twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. When the political turmoil in Ethiopia began in 1974 as a prelude to the revolution, Somalia helped organize the Western Somali Liberation Front with the objective of "liberating" the Ogaden from Ethiopian control. The WSLF intensified its guerrilla activity in the Ogaden, taking advantage of the weakness of Ethiopian government forces, most of whom were being deployed in Eritrea. The domestic disarray in Ethiopia and its military difficulties (given the termination of U.S. military aid) provided an opportune moment for Somalia to launch its invasion of the Ogaden in July 1977. Throughout the summer of 1977, President Barre continued to deny the involvement of his armed forces, attributing the invasion to the WSLF, in spite of eyewitness accounts to the contrary. Ethiopia and Somalia broke off diplomatic relations in September 1977, and relations had not been restored as of 1987.

Somalia's decision to invade the Ogaden may also be explained by a combination of many other factors.¹⁰ It is possible that President Barre believed that the Soviets were treaty-bound to Somalia not to provide aid to Somalia's adversaries. Besides, the Somalis could not see why the Soviets would risk a secure position in Somalia to support an unstable regime in Ethiopia. It also appeared that Somalis had tacit encouragement and support from the Carter administration for their planned invasion of the Ogaden.¹¹ This has been dismissed as a Somali misperception of the U.S. position, but it is also clear that U.S. and Western powers, which had shown an inclination to provide weapons to Somalia before the Ogaden conflict, later balked when Somalia would not guarantee the use of the weapons to pursue its objective of "Greater Somalia." On the other hand, Soviet and Cuban military assistance to Ethiopia turned the military balance against Somalia, which had to withdraw its forces in March 1978 after a crushing defeat. It is estimated that the Cuban-led counteroffensive destroyed over 75 percent of Somalia's tanks, 50 percent of its combat air force, and about 8,000 of its best troops were killed.¹²

The defeat of Somali forces in the Ogaden brought to the surface opposition elements within the Somali armed forces; these opposition elements failed in an attempt to overthrow the Siad Barre regime in April 1978.¹³ A few of the survivors of the failed coup d'état managed

to take refuge in Ethiopia, where they were encouraged to organize the Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS), whose objective was to overthrow Siad Barre's regime. After early successes, the DFSS weakened because of problems of leadership and the defection of many of its members. DFSS's credibility was brought into question by its reliance on Ethiopia, Somalia's archenemy. Ethiopia also supported the Somali National Movement (SNM), an opposition group against President Barre based in northern Somalia. Somalia, for its part, continued to support not only the WSLF but also other dissident groups that have no ethnic links with it. In August 1983, President Barre hosted a conference of representatives of the WSLF, ELF, and the TPLF in the Somali capital of Mogadishu. According to Radio Mogadishu, the objective of the conference was "to encourage cooperation between the movements in their struggle to achieve total independence from the Ethiopian regime."¹⁴ Such support for dissident groups may continue to intensify the conflict between the countries. In the meantime, the war and persistent drought have forced thousands of Ogaden Somalis to flee to Somalia, creating one of the worst refugee situations in the world. The two countries have traded charges of exploiting the refugee issue. Somalia accused Ethiopia of driving thousands of ethnic Somalis out of the Ogaden into Somalia. Ethiopia charged Somalia of inflating the number of refugees to justify increased international assistance. As of March 1986, there were an estimated 700,000 Ethiopian refugees, mostly ethnic Somalis, inside Somalia.¹⁵

After the defeat of Somali forces in Ogaden in March 1978, Ethiopia asserted military superiority over Somalia. Since July 1982, Ethiopian forces have been occupying two outposts inside southern Somalia along the two major roads that run from Mogadishu toward the Ogaden. The two outposts of Balamballe and Geldgob—29 and 24 km. (18 and 15 mi.), respectively, from the border—are bases from which Ethiopia and Somali dissident guerrillas of the DFSS and SNM have been conducting military operations against Somalia. The outmanned and outgunned Somali army has not been able to dislodge them.

In January 1986 Mengistu and Siad Barre held preliminary talks in Djibouti. The two leaders were attending a six-nation conference held in Djibouti to establish an Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). The mediator was President Hassan Gouled Aptidon of Djibouti. The two leaders agreed to establish a committee to examine the differences between their two countries and explore the resumption of diplomatic relations.¹⁶ The meeting between the two leaders may signal a major shift from military confrontation to negotiation and is the first gesture for peace talks by both countries since 1977. It is not certain whether Barre's main strategy is a final peace settlement

with Ethiopia or a short-term objective designed to weaken Somali opposition elements that operate with Ethiopian support. The premise is that if Ethiopia and Somalia sign a peace accord, then both sides will have to stop supporting such dissidents—that is, Ethiopia will have to stop supporting the DFSS and SNM, and Somalia will have to renounce any claims over the Ogaden and stop supporting the WSLF.

There are strong reasons for resolving the conflict between the two countries. The large number of Ethiopian refugees in Somalia has been an enormous economic burden on Somalia's meager resources; peace with Ethiopia could lead to their repatriation. Militarily, Somalia is at a disadvantage because it is greatly inferior in troops, aircraft, armor, artillery, and supplies, with no prospect for matching Ethiopia's strength. For Ethiopia, a rapprochement with Somalia would permit it to concentrate its resources on rebuilding its economy and focus its military on separatist guerrillas in Tigray and Eritrea. Thus, economic and military factors in both Ethiopia and Somalia dictate peace talks and negotiations.

Kenya

Ethiopia has its worst relations with Somalia, but its best relations with Kenya. The relationship between Kenya and Ethiopia benefited from the mutual friendship of Jomo Kenyatta and Haile Selassie and from the absence of any territorial disputes between the two countries. A key element in their relationship is Somalia's territorial claims on both Ethiopia and Kenya, which has made them targets of Somali guerrilla insurrection in the Ogaden and in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) of Kenya. The two countries signed an agreement of cooperation and mutual defense assistance in 1964 in order to contain Pan-Somalism. The agreement resulted in the Ethiopia-Kenya Border Administration Commission, which meets annually. In its January 1983 meeting, the commission condemned Somalia's "expansionist ambitions" and urged all countries to refrain from arming the Somali regime.¹⁷

In spite of their ideological differences (Ethiopia is a Marxist state, and Kenya is not), several developments have indicated even stronger ties between Ethiopia and Kenya. During the drought in 1977–1978, Kenya provided food grains to Ethiopia. When Sudan and Somalia supported Eritrean and Somali guerrillas who in 1977 disrupted Ethiopia's access to Red Sea ports, Kenya offered its embattled neighbor the use of the Kenyan port of Mombassa, which the completion that year of the Addis Ababa–Nairobi highway made possible. During the Somali invasion of the Ogaden, Kenya detained aircraft carrying arms from Egypt to Somalia, to the detriment of its relations with Egypt. Kenya was partly instrumental in preventing Somalia from enlisting U.S. and

Western military aid after its losses in the 1977–1978 war against Ethiopia. Kenya, which is a close ally of the United States, was opposed to any U.S. military assistance to Somalia, because it was concerned that such arms might be used by Somalia to invade the NFD of Kenya. In 1978 Kenya warned that its Indian Ocean ports might be closed to U.S. warships if Washington sent arms to Somalia.¹⁸

Djibouti

Relations between Ethiopia and Djibouti are cordial. Djibouti, a small arid territory with less than 500,000 people, was France's last colony in Africa and received its independence on June 27, 1977. Independence was delayed because of the conflicting wishes of its two dominant ethnic groups, the Isa and Afar. The Isa, who constitute about 60 percent of the population, have attachment to the Somali republic, whereas the Afar, who constitute about 40 percent, favor political association with the Afar in Ethiopia, where the majority of the Afar people live. Hence, Djibouti's independence had to be guaranteed by Ethiopia and Somalia and by a French military presence. Djibouti's two major resources, the port of Djibouti and the Djibouti–Addis Ababa railway, depend on serving the Ethiopian hinterland. The railway, which carried about half of Ethiopia's imports and exports in the mid-1970s, was sabotaged by Somali guerrillas during the Ethiopian-Somali war of 1977–1978, with severe consequences for both countries. Since the reopening of the railway in late 1978, Ethiopia has reduced its reliance on Djibouti by redirecting most of its imports and exports to the port of Aseb, which was improved in 1980 with the help of East Germany.

Djibouti's economic reliance on Ethiopia and the interests of its Afar population are balanced by the ethnic and cultural attachment of the Isa to Somalia. Consequently, Djibouti maintains friendly relations with both its neighbors. Ethiopia and Djibouti signed a ten-year treaty of friendship and cooperation in 1981, as well as several economic agreements since, to strengthen relations between the two countries.¹⁹ When Mengistu visited Djibouti in March 1984, President Aptidon offered his services as a regional mediator. He was instrumental in arranging the meeting between Mengistu and Siad Barre in Djibouti in January 1986, the first meeting of IGADD. The resolution of the Ethiopian-Somali conflict is vital to Djibouti, which shelters thousands of refugees.

As a member of the Arab League, Djibouti receives generous amounts of aid from Saudi Arabia. Both the Saudis and the French are attempting to provide a counterforce to Soviet military presence in Ethiopia and South Yemen. Djibouti's strategic location at the mouth of the Bab el Mandeb Strait and its deep-water port has made it France's

key base in the Indian Ocean and an important port of call for U.S. warships. But so far, this has not complicated its relations with Ethiopia.

The Sudan

Ethiopia and Sudan share a common boundary of over 2,000 km. (1,200 mi.), and their relations have been good for most years since Sudan's independence in 1956. Strains have occurred primarily over Eritrean separatists who have received arms through Sudan. Before the 1974 revolution, Sudanese governments had been careful not to recognize Eritrean separatists officially, for fear Ethiopia might retaliate by supporting southern Sudanese dissident groups who had been waging a war of independence against the Khartoum government. The Ethiopian government played an important role in the 1972 peace agreement that ended the war in the southern Sudan, but the Sudan failed to prevent Eritrean guerrillas from operating out of its territory. In 1975, Sudan's attempt to mediate between Ethiopia and Eritrean guerrillas was unsuccessful because the Eritreans, who at the time had gained the upper hand militarily, would consider peace talks only to negotiate the terms of Eritrea's independence, a condition that was unacceptable to Ethiopia. During 1976–1977, domestic strife in Ethiopia, including military reverses in Eritrea and Ogaden and the PMAC's turn toward the Soviet Union, heightened tensions in Ethiopian-Sudanese relations.

President Numeiry had been suspicious of the Kremlin since the Communist-inspired abortive coup against his regime in July 1971. His suspicions were confirmed by another coup attempt in July 1976. Sudan claimed that the rebels had been trained in Ethiopia and Libya and had been backed by the Soviet Union. Although Ethiopia denied the allegations, both it and Sudan recalled their ambassadors in January 1977, and relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate. (It was fear of Soviet-inspired instability that had led to the signing of a defense pact between Egypt and the Sudan in 1976.) In order to counter the emerging axis comprising Libya, Ethiopia, and the Soviet Union, Numeiry held talks with the leaders of Egypt, Syria, Somalia, North and South Yemen, and Saudi Arabia urging the creation of a united Arab bloc, but the proposal never got off the ground. However, in a determined effort to undermine the military government in Ethiopia, Numeiry decided in 1976 and 1977 to openly support Eritrean separatists and the Ethiopian Democratic Union, an opposition group led by former royalists. The Sudan also joined Egypt in helping Somalia in its war against Ethiopia.²⁰ Numeiry advocated the removal of the headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and of the OAU from Addis Ababa. It took an OAU commission to urge the two countries to stop hostile propaganda and provocations against each other. The

leaders of Ethiopia and Sudan held talks in Sierra Leone in July 1978 during the OAU annual conference, and relations between the countries improved for a while.

The normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Sudan is explained by many factors. By the summer of 1978, Ethiopia had regained the Ogaden and most of Eritrea, thanks to Soviet and Cuban military support. Ethiopia's growing military strength would continue to be a threat to Sudan unless relations between the two countries improved. Ethiopia could also incite the southern Sudanese to rebel against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum. Furthermore, Numeiry's decision to back Sadat's peace mission to Jerusalem had isolated Sudan and Egypt from most of the Arab world and had undermined Numeiry's initiative to create an Arab bloc to frustrate Soviet objectives in the Gulf and the Horn of Africa. Besides, the problem of Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan, which was a constraint on Sudan's economic growth, could be resolved only by mediating between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Although tension between the two countries had eased by late 1978, it was not until March 1980 that they signed a peace agreement to respect one another's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The agreement led to the closing of the EPLF offices in Khartoum, but attempts to prevent the flow of supplies to the guerrillas and to restrict their movements across the border were not successful. It was not certain whether Sudan was unable or unwilling to prevent the EPLF from using it as a base, but both countries continued to exchange delegations to ease the intermittent tension that plagued relations between them. The latest tension concerned the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), a group representing dissident southern Sudanese who opposed Khartoum's proposals to divide the south into separate administrative regions. The Sudanese government charged that the SPLM, which attacked an oil installation and a Sudanese military garrison in February 1984, was supported by Ethiopia. Consequently, talks between Sudanese and Ethiopian officials scheduled for March 1984 in Nairobi were cancelled.

Numeiry's anti-Soviet stand, his support for Egypt in the Camp David peace accords, and his offer of air and naval facilities for the U.S. Rapid Deployment force, earned him U.S. gratitude and aid, the largest in sub-Saharan Africa during 1980–1985. Sudan's growing alliance with the United States and with anti-Soviet nations in the region, such as Egypt, Somalia, and Oman, brought Ethiopia, Libya, and South Yemen, three pro-Soviet countries, to sign a defense treaty in August 1981, in which they pledged "joint struggle against imperialism."²¹ However, after the overthrow of President Numeiry in April 1985, the new Sudanese government was critical of U.S. policy in the region.

The new regime expressed its desire to improve relations with Ethiopia and Libya in order to resolve the rebellion in the southern Sudan, as both Ethiopia and Libya were prime supporters of the SPLM. Colonel Kadaffi of Libya paid a brief visit to Sudan in May 1985, and Sudan not only reestablished diplomatic ties with Libya but also signed a military agreement. In exchange for the military agreement, Libya pledged help in financing a large agricultural project and offered to initiate peace talks with the SPLM.²² Because of this sudden downturn in U.S.-Sudanese relations, the annual joint military exercises scheduled for August 1985 (as part of the Operation Bright Star series, which began in 1981) were cancelled. U.S.-Sudanese relations further deteriorated after the U.S. bombing of Libya in April 1986, which aroused anti-American sentiment in Khartoum.

The Ethiopian regime, which has had its own difficulties in its relations with the United States and has expressed concern about U.S. military activities in the region, welcomes a lower profile in U.S.-Sudanese relations, especially in the military field. However, the future of Ethiopian-Sudanese relations largely depends on the resolution of the Eritrean and southern Sudanese problems. Unless the new Sudanese regime commits itself to withdraw support from Eritrean separatist movements who have used the Sudan as a haven for their guerrilla activities, Ethiopia may increase its support for southern Sudanese rebels, which will continue to strain relations between the two countries. There are indications that the Ethiopian government may be mediating between Khartoum and the southern Sudan. The new Sudanese prime minister, Sadiq Mahdi, and rebel leader John Garang met in early August 1986 in Addis Ababa to discuss an end to the conflict in the southern Sudan.

The Arab World

Relations between Ethiopia and the Arab world have been largely influenced by the war in Eritrea, by Ethiopia's relations with Israel, and since 1977 by its relations with the Soviet Union. The ELF, the first Eritrean separatist movement, was able to win the support of Arab countries by alleging persecution of Muslims in Eritrea and by its commitment to create an "Arab" Eritrea, a policy that fit Arab dreams of converting the Red Sea into an exclusive "Arab lake."²³ Arab support for Eritrean separatists is based not only on religious factors but also on Ethiopia's connection with Israel. Prior to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Ethiopia's ports were open to Israeli ships, a policy that undermined Arab plans to isolate Israel. Israel also had an active trade and technical-aid program in Ethiopia, as in many other African countries. Consequently, Eritrean separatists closely identified with Pan-Arab and anti-Zionist movements, which assured them strong Arab support. After the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, Ethiopia was one of many African countries that

broke off diplomatic relations with Israel,²⁴ but this did not deter many Arab countries from continuing to support Eritrean separatists. At the Arab League summit in Saudi Arabia in January 1980, a special committee on Eritrea was set up, and in 1982 the Arab League called for self-determination in Eritrea.

Ethiopia recognizes the importance of improving relations with Arab countries because it is Arab aid that sustains the Eritrean separatist movement. Since 1974, Ethiopia has been able to build ties with Libya, North and South Yemen, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—all of whom had been strong supporters of Eritrean separatists. Relations with South Yemen and Libya are particularly good; in 1981 the three countries signed a defense pact. Libya's alliance with Ethiopia is mainly Colonel Kaddafi's way of hitting back at Egypt and at former President Numeiry of Sudan, who spurned his call for union with Libya. The Ethiopian alliance with South Yemen is based on a common ideological commitment to Marxism and ties with the Soviet Union. South Yemen served as a staging area for Soviet arms deliveries to Ethiopia in 1977 and 1978, and its soldiers assisted in the war in Eritrea and Ogaden. Ethiopia has also recognized the PLO, which has maintained an office in Addis Ababa since 1978.

On the other hand, Egypt and Saudi Arabia maintain diplomatic ties with Ethiopia, but the Saudis continue to support Somali irredentism and Eritrean separatism. Saudi Arabia's overriding concern is Ethiopia's relation with the Soviet Union, which it views as a threat to the Red Sea region. The Soviet Union operates an air and naval facility there in the Dahlak Islands. Ethiopia's relations with Algeria and Syria are cordial, but relations with Iraq are unfriendly because Iraq persists in its support for Eritrean independence (in spite of its own suppression of Kurdish secessionism). Ties with Morocco and Tunisia have been broken—with the former because of Ethiopia's support for the independence of western Sahara and with the latter because of its call for self-determination in Eritrea. Thus, although the Ethiopian government has improved ties with some Arab countries and partially succeeded in undercutting support for Eritrean separatists, it continues to have considerable problems with many Arab regimes that span the ideological gamut, reflecting those regimes' own political idiosyncrasies, their ambivalence about Ethiopia's stand on Eritrea and about its relationship with the Soviet Union.

THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN EUROPE

The United States

Although U.S.-Ethiopian relations date back to 1903, strong ties developed only after the liberation of Ethiopia from Fascist forces in

1941. The restriction imposed on Ethiopia by the British under the 1942 Anglo-Ethiopian agreement and the reluctance of the British to provide economic and military aid for the rehabilitation of Ethiopia gave the emperor grounds to appeal to the United States for both political and economic support. U.S. support for Ethiopia was rationalized by a combination of several political and economic factors. Support for Ethiopia, the State Department argued, "would indicate in a concrete way the interest of the U.S. in the stake which Negroes have in the war" and would help Ethiopia qualify for lend-lease.²⁵ This would affirm U.S. interest in the rehabilitation of liberated countries, thereby facilitating the participation of U.S. business in Ethiopia's development after the war. Furthermore, support for Ethiopia's admission to the United Nations could assist in the extension of U.S. airlines flights to India and the Far East via Ethiopia. An additional factor that figured in U.S. assistance was Ethiopia's potential as a source of foodstuffs for the war effort in the Middle East and Europe.

The United States reopened its legation in Addis Ababa, and on August 9, 1943, a mutual aid agreement was signed between the United States and Ethiopia. The Ethiopian government calculated that the agreement would ensure it the economic and political support of an emerging world power and prevent British domination of Ethiopia. In the same year, Ethiopia appointed its first ambassador to the United States. At the invitation of Ethiopia, the United States in 1944 sent a technical mission, which assessed Ethiopia's economic and social conditions. The Fellows Mission (named for the mission's leader) coming so soon after the mutual aid agreement was an important step in U.S.-Ethiopian relations.

President Roosevelt and Emperor Haile Selassie met in February 1945 aboard a U.S. ship in the Suez Canal. Among the issues discussed were Ethiopia's need for access to the sea, Ethiopia's request for U.S. support for the return of Eritrea, the status of the Ogaden, the emperor's wish to promote U.S. enterprises in Ethiopia, and a request by Ethiopia for financing for arms, transport, and communications equipment.²⁶ The meeting between the two leaders affirmed U.S. concern for and interest in Ethiopia. The United States assisted in the introduction of a new currency in 1945 and the establishment of Ethiopian Airlines in 1946. Ethiopia started receiving small amounts of U.S. military and economic aid in the late 1940s but nowhere close to the quantity and quality of aid the emperor had wanted.

When British withdrawal from Eritrea and the Ogaden became evident in 1948, the U.S. government realized that Ethiopian control of Eritrea and the Ogaden would safeguard U.S. interests in the region. These interests included prospecting for oil in the Ogaden by the Sinclair

Oil Corporation, a guaranteed access to a strategically important communications facility in Asmera, and the maintenance of an oil and supply depot in Massawa.²⁷ The United States thus supported Ethiopia's claim to Eritrea, and soon after, in 1951, the emperor committed a battalion of Ethiopian troops for the war in Korea. U.S.-Ethiopian relations were further strengthened by the signing in 1952 of a technical assistance agreement under the Point Four Program. This was followed in 1953 by a major agreement in which the United States was to provide economic and military assistance in return for a twenty-five-year lease of a communications facility (Kagnew Station) in Eritrea. The close ties between Ethiopia and the United States during the early years of the cold war led to the inclusion of Ethiopia in U.S. strategy to deny the Soviet Union influence along the southern periphery of the Middle East.²⁸ Such considerations brought increased U.S. economic and military aid to Ethiopia in the late 1950s.

Following the independence of Somalia in 1960 and Somalia's bid to annex the Ogaden, Ethiopia was able to secure more military aid, maintaining an army of about 40,000 troops, as well as a small air force and navy. U.S. involvement in Ethiopia increased after the abortive coup of 1960, as hundreds of U.S. personnel were assigned as advisors in government, education, and the armed forces. By 1970, over 2,500 members of Ethiopia's armed forces had received training in the United States, and Ethiopia had received about \$150 million in U.S. military aid, more than any other African country. The United States maintained a large Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Ethiopia to coordinate aid and training of Ethiopia's armed forces. U.S. geopolitical interest in Ethiopia derived from Ethiopia's location on the periphery of the Middle East and its proximity to the southern reaches of the Red Sea, which gave it a commanding position over the strategic Bab el Mandeb Strait, through which pass many oil-carrying ships.

The United States also maintained a large aid program in Ethiopia to coordinate U.S. economic and technical assistance. Major U.S. aid projects included the creation and operation of colleges of agriculture, public health, and business administration, the organization and training of Ethiopian Airlines, higher education for Ethiopians in U.S. universities, and the Peace Corps. Ethiopia attracted a large number of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers in the 1960s. During the peak year of 1969, there were 442 Peace Corps members in Ethiopia, primarily teaching in secondary schools. By 1977, when the United States decided to stop aid deliveries, Ethiopia had received over \$600 million in loans and grants, placing it among the ten most favored nations in Africa.

The bloodless nature of the military takeover in Ethiopia in 1974 was taken in the West as a sign of stability and moderation. The regime

was considered to be pro-Western, given the background of the military establishment in Ethiopia. But after the execution of over fifty of the most powerful members of the imperial establishment in November 1974 and the government's subsequent declaration of socialism, U.S.-Ethiopian relations deteriorated. When banks, insurance companies, and industries were nationalized in accordance with the new socialist policy, the U.S. government demanded compensation, which the PMAC was reluctant to consider at the time. What put U.S.-Ethiopian relations to the test was Ethiopia's request for military aid to contain Somali and Eritrean separatist movements. The U.S. government granted only one-third of Ethiopia's request of about \$31 million after a hearing on March 5, 1975, by the U.S. House of Representatives to assess recent developments in Ethiopia. The reluctance of the United States to meet Ethiopia's military needs, in spite of the 1953 agreement, was a clear sign of U.S. displeasure with Ethiopia's new revolutionary government.

The deteriorating domestic situation in Ethiopia prompted the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs to hold hearings on August 4-6, 1976. The purpose of the hearings was to "reevaluate Ethiopia's strategic and political role in East Africa and the broader significance of East Africa for our [U.S.] interest in the Red Sea, the Arabian Peninsula and the Indian Ocean."²⁹ The hearings concluded that the United States, as the sole arms supplier to Ethiopia, could pressure the PMAC to stop its violations of human rights, which had heightened tension in U.S.-Ethiopian relations. Consequently, the Ford administration decided to stop military grants to Ethiopia but approved continued sales of military hardware on credit. This U.S. policy served those groups in Ethiopia that had been advocating breaking links with the United States in order to develop stronger ties with the Eastern bloc.

When the Carter administration came into office, Ethiopia was targeted for termination of U.S. foreign aid because of its violations of human rights. The United States stopped delivery of military aid to Ethiopia, including arms already paid for by the Ethiopian government, which viewed the new U.S. policy as a violation of the twenty-five-year mutual assistance agreement signed in 1953. Thus, Ethiopia found itself unable to maintain internal security and deter Somali threats of invasion. These developments forced the PMAC to look toward the Soviet bloc. The tilt toward the Soviet Union was facilitated when Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam emerged as the strong man of the military government in February 1977. There were a few voices in the United States that denounced Carter's human rights policy as having driven Ethiopia into Moscow's arms, but they were ineffective.³⁰ Although Carter's policy may have hastened the deterioration in U.S.-Ethiopian

relations, it is doubtful that friendly relations could have continued given the anti-U.S. propaganda of the Ethiopian government.

The last straw in U.S.-Ethiopian relations was the decision by the U.S. government in April 1977 to downgrade its alliance with Ethiopia following a National Security Review. The United States reduced its forty-six-member Military Assistance Advisory Group by more than half and, by September 1977, closed down its communications base in Asmera.³¹ This came as no surprise; the United States had started to phase down its communications base in Eritrea (the basis of the 1953 U.S.-Ethiopian agreement) as early as 1970–1972 in favor of satellite communications and the new Diego Garcia base in the Indian Ocean. A clear indication of declining U.S. strategic interest in Ethiopia was demonstrated in 1973 when the Nixon administration denied the emperor's request for additional military aid to counter the growth of the Soviet-equipped Somali military.³² Furthermore, President Sadat's ejection of the Soviets from Egypt in 1973 had secured for the United States a strategically coveted position, further minimizing Ethiopia's importance to U.S. geopolitical interests. What hastened the reassessment of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Ethiopia was mounting anti-U.S. propaganda in Ethiopia and Ethiopia's overtures to the Socialist bloc. After Ethiopia received a firm commitment of aid from the Soviet Union, it expelled the entire U.S. MAAG team and closed the U.S. communications base, the U.S. consulate in Eritrea, the U.S. Information Service, and the Naval Medical Research Unit in Addis Ababa.³³ As if to underscore the deterioration of U.S.-Ethiopian relations, the new Ethiopian head of state embarked on an official visit to the Soviet Union in May 1977, where he signed an agreement that became the basis for future relations between the two countries. The Somali invasion of Ogaden soon provided a test for Soviet commitment to the beleaguered Ethiopian regime. Even while the Ethiopian counteroffensive was under way, Carter sent an envoy to extract assurances from Ethiopia that the offensive would not be carried into Somali territory.

Although U.S. and West European interest in the Horn of Africa was not great enough to risk a superpower confrontation, events in Iran and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan raised the spectre of Soviet military threat to the region. In light of these developments, the U.S. government in 1980 stated its interests in the Horn of Africa as follows:

First we seek support from Somalia and Kenya for our activities in the Indian Ocean. Second we seek support for the peace process begun at Camp David. Kenya supports the process. Sudan and Somalia are two of the three Arab League members who have continued their relations with Egypt after Camp David. . . . Third, we seek to limit Soviet influence

in and access to the Horn by encouraging the peaceful settlement of its local conflicts which provide a pretext for Soviet military intervention.³⁴

In order to contain Soviet influence in the Horn of Africa, the Reagan administration proposed "to strengthen America's military hand around the Persian Gulf" with a military aid package of about \$6.9 billion to Egypt, Oman, Somalia, Kenya, the Sudan, Tunisia, and Turkey.³⁵ The administration allocated \$42 million in military aid to Somalia and \$24 million to improve the Somali port of Berbera, the former Soviet naval base, which has been accorded importance by virtue of its greater proximity to the Gulf than Diego Garcia's. The signing of the defense agreement between Ethiopia, Libya, and South Yemen in August 1981 must be seen in light of U.S. military presence in the region and the U.S. commitment to provide massive military aid to Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia. Although the United States refused to provide Somalia with military hardware, such as tanks and fighter aircraft, that would raise its offensive capabilities, it provided air defense systems, artillery, armored vehicles, and communications equipment.³⁶ The United States remained the major donor of military aid to Somalia, giving \$130 million in 1985 and 1986. Somalia had been participating in the Bright Star exercises of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force since 1981. The military exercises in Somalia in 1985 centered around Berbera, where the United States had completed construction to improve the port's naval and air defense facilities.

The Ethiopian government has denounced U.S. military activities in northeast Africa, the Indian Ocean, and its military aid to Somalia, in spite of U.S. reassurance that its military activities relate to U.S. interests in the Gulf. And as long as Ethiopia feels threatened by U.S. military presence in the region, the Soviets will maintain a strong influence in Ethiopia by their material and ideological assistance to the military regime. This is bound to continue to strain relations between the United States and Ethiopia; since July 1980, diplomatic relations have been kept only at the *chargé d'affaires* level. Another issue that complicated U.S.-Ethiopian relations was Ethiopia's offer of \$2.5 million as compensation to sixteen U.S. interests that claimed to have lost \$22 million from expropriation of their property. Because of this failure to resolve the issue of compensation, the United States was prevented by the Hickenlooper Amendment from giving economic aid to Ethiopia. This amendment authorizes the U.S. government to retaliate against foreign countries that nationalize private property owned by U.S. interests. However, the African Famine Relief and Recovery Act of 1985 empowered the U.S. government to grant assistance to Ethiopia "without regard" to previous legislations that prohibited development aid to countries

that had nationalized U.S. private or government property.³⁷ U.S. humanitarian assistance to Ethiopian famine victims amounted to \$9.6 million in 1983 and \$18 million in 1984.

In an agreement concluded in December 1985, the Ethiopian government finally agreed to compensate U.S. companies whose properties had been nationalized in 1975. The agreement called for Ethiopia to pay about \$7 million in installments;³⁸ the first payment of \$1.5 million was made in 1986. However, tensions between the United States and Ethiopia have continued on a variety of issues. The U.S. government charged that the famine was partly the result of Ethiopia's socialist economic policy. The Reagan administration and representatives of other Western governments criticized Ethiopia's plan to resettle famine victims, especially the alleged use of force in the resettlement and the lack of preparation at the resettlement sites. In addition, the United States argued that the resettlement program diverted trucks and logistics from distribution of food and medicine to drought victims.

Although there is consensus among development specialists on the need for resettlement of famine victims, there is also wide agreement with U.S. accusations that the resettlement was poorly planned and haphazardly executed and thus led to high mortality rates among famine victims. The Ethiopian government, through Politburo member Berhanu Bayih, later admitted that "mistakes had been made in the conduct of resettlement programme" and that the resettlement had been temporarily suspended.³⁹ The United States also criticized Ethiopia's recent "villagization" program because the peasants had to build houses in the new villages instead of growing food crops, thus compounding the food shortage.

In a 1985 May Day speech, Mengistu accused Western "imperialists" of waging "psychological warfare" and a "multi-dimensional" campaign against his country's famine-relief program. He said, imperialists "vilify and oppose all our positive efforts (against famine) and pretend to sympathise with our people and . . . sneer at the socialist goal for which we struggle."⁴⁰ The Ethiopian government charged that, had the United States and its Western European allies responded when Ethiopia appealed for help early in 1983, the famine would not have reached catastrophic proportions. Ethiopian accusations seem to be borne out by a study conducted in 1985 by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO). The study concluded that the U.S. government delayed food shipments to Ethiopia after the U.S. Agency for International Development received several requests during 1982–1984 from private and international groups, including the Catholic Relief Service. Justification for the delay was based on "several policy concerns" about providing food to a Soviet client state. According to the GAO report, U.S. officials argued that aid

would permit Ethiopia to save foreign exchange to buy military hardware to fight opponents of the regime.⁴¹ After two years of inaction, the Reagan administration was finally pushed to provide emergency aid to Ethiopia by the U.S. Congress, the press, and public opinion.

However, recriminations by both the United States and Ethiopia have subsided since September 1985, when the Ethiopian government agreed to allow Western relief agencies to extend their food distribution to rebel-held areas in Eritrea and Tigray. The Reagan administration, which had previously accused the Ethiopian government of deliberately adopting policies that cause "vast human suffering," later decided against imposing a trade embargo on Ethiopia because it was no longer pursuing such a policy.⁴² In return, the Ethiopian government decreased its anti-U.S. propaganda. Earlier, the U.S. government had been angered by an alleged Ethiopian attempt to downplay the extent of U.S. aid, which is the largest to any country. Such massive U.S. assistance for food, medical supplies, and logistical support may create the basis for more cordial future U.S.-Ethiopian relations.⁴³ In May 1986, Mengistu indicated that a rapprochement between Ethiopia and the United States is possible and welcome. He stressed that "the first step toward that . . . is to curb the anti-Ethiopian stance which the (Reagan) administration has adopted."⁴⁴ The United States welcomed a dialogue that would lead to better relations.

Western Europe

U.S. allies in Western Europe were also suspected of attempts to undermine the Ethiopian revolution. Shortly after the Carter administration suspended aid to Ethiopia in February 1977, the PMAC ordered the closing of the British, Italian, Belgian, and French consulates in Eritrea and ordered the expulsion of the U.S. and British defense attachés in May 1977. Great Britain was accused of aiding the opposition Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU) and of being sympathetic with the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP) and the Eritrean separatists. The British press came under a sharp attack for its critical coverage of events in Ethiopia. After Ethiopia paid the first installment to compensate the British firm of Mitchell Cotts for cotton estates and other assets nationalized after 1974, Britain indicated its desire for closer contacts with the Ethiopian government.

During the Somali invasion of Ogaden in July 1977, Ethiopia threatened to break off diplomatic relations if the United States, Great Britain, and West Germany supplied arms to Somalia. West Germany, which had a modest aid program in Ethiopia for many years, was ordered by the Ethiopian government to recall its ambassador and close the office of its defense attaché because it had offered financial aid to

Somalia for its cooperation in rescuing a hijacked West German airline in October 1977. Relations with France have always been smooth, but when the International Secretariat of the French Socialist party criticized the escalation of the war in Eritrea in 1982 and called for self-determination in Eritrea, Ethiopia denounced the decision and ordered the French embassy in Addis Ababa to cut its staff by half. Sweden had been involved in a vital rural development program in Ethiopia for many years and had assisted Swedish missionaries in operating schools in remote parts of Welega, one of the regions inhabited by the Oromo. Swedish relations with the PMAC soured after the missions were ordered closed in 1981 because of Ethiopian suspicions that the missionaries were supporting Oromo separatists.

Since 1979, economic problems have convinced the PMAC to look toward the West, which has responded favorably. There is a broad consensus in Western Europe that economic assistance may prevent Ethiopia from completely falling into the Soviet bloc.⁴⁵ Ethiopia's willingness to pay compensation to European firms nationalized in 1975 led to the signing of numerous aid agreements with their governments. Relations with members of the EEC have so improved that prospects for increased aid from France, Britain, and West Germany for Ethiopia's new ten-year economic plan have been encouraging. Ethiopia had already signed economic aid agreements with Sweden and Italy. The Ethiopian government also sought emergency food assistance from the EEC, which announced on October 30, 1984, an \$18.4 million emergency package of 100,000 t. (110,000 tn.) of cereals in addition to medical aid and transport help for famine victims in Ethiopia. In 1985 members of the EEC offered over 198,000 t. (217,800 tn.) of food.

THE SOVIET UNION AND THE SOCIALIST WORLD

The Soviet Union

Ethiopian-Soviet relations date back to 1903, when the czarist government started maintaining a diplomatic mission in Ethiopia. The basis of the relationship was a hospital built by the czarist government, which the Soviet government continued to support, and the tacit encouragement by the Soviets of links between the Ethiopian and Russian Orthodox Churches. In the postwar period, the Ethiopian government's desire to pursue a nonaligned foreign policy, in spite of its strong economic and military ties with the United States, led to a \$100 million Soviet economic aid agreement in 1959. Major Soviet aid to Ethiopia included an oil refinery in the port of Aseb and a polytechnical institute in Bahir Dar.

Soviet interest in Ethiopia transcended ideological considerations and was based mainly on Ethiopia's proximity to the Middle East and the Red Sea, as well as on the emergence of Ethiopia as a major center of inter-African politics, with Addis Ababa serving as headquarters for both the Organization of African Unity and the Economic Commission for Africa. However, Soviet arms supplies to Somalia and the Soviet-Somali Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in July 1974 raised Ethiopian concerns about Soviet intentions in the Horn of Africa. The fact that the Ethiopian student movement was Marxist also raised suspicion in government circles about the Soviet role in rising student militancy.

After the 1974 revolution, the Soviet Union and its allies could not fail to be impressed by the zeal and determination of the military government to create a socialist state.⁴⁶ The Soviets were cool toward the Ethiopian revolution at first and ignored various overtures from the PMAC for closer relations. Soviet reluctance to be closely identified with the Ethiopian revolution stemmed from Ethiopia's continuing ties with the United States and from fear of antagonizing Somalia (especially in light of setbacks in the Sudan and Egypt, where the Soviets had lost influence in spite of massive economic and military aid). After the Soviets ascertained Ethiopia's tilt toward socialism, they entertained the possibility of mediating between Ethiopia and Somalia by maintaining a strong presence in Ethiopia. An Ethiopian delegation visited Moscow in July 1976, and the Soviets dispatched a team of specialists to Ethiopia in October 1976 to explore areas in which the Soviet Union could assist.

After the United States terminated its aid to Ethiopia in February 1977, the PMAC (which had been sounding out the socialist world for military aid) and the Kremlin signed a Declaration of the Basic Principles of Friendly Mutual Relations and Cooperation, which included a \$500 million arms deal. Shortly afterwards, arms began to arrive in Ethiopia from the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Czechoslovakia, together with Soviet and Cuban advisors to help train Ethiopia's armed forces. The Somali government, which voiced concern about the Soviet-Ethiopian arms deal, was reassured by the Soviet Union that their aid to Ethiopia was not targeted against Somalia but was to be used to deter domestic insurrection in Ethiopia. The Soviet Union attempted to restrain the Somali government from a war against Ethiopia, but they unfortunately underestimated the dedication of Somali leaders to the idea of "Greater Somalia." Soviet support for Ethiopia against the Somali invasion led to the abrogation of the Soviet-Somali treaty signed in 1974, the ejection of Soviet advisors from Somalia, and the denial of Soviet access to the air and naval facilities in Berbera.

Why did the Kremlin decide to back Ethiopia and risk a break with Somalia? Ethiopia is a much larger country in size, population,

and resources and of greater political importance in Africa than Somalia. Ideologically, the Soviets considered the Ethiopian revolution as the most promising experiment to create a socialist state in Africa, and they were determined to use their power to salvage it.⁴⁷ Strategically, a Soviet foothold in Ethiopia, in addition to Soviet influence in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, would allow the USSR greater strategic leverage in the Bab el Mandeb Strait, which commands the southern entrance to the Red Sea. Soviet access to the ports of Massawa and Aseb and the possibility of a permanent military base in the Dahlak Islands were very attractive alternatives to the Somali port of Berbera. In addition to the key Soviet naval base at the South Yemen island of Socotra in the Arabian Sea, these would facilitate Soviet naval deployment in the Indian Ocean to match the U.S./British military base at Diego Garcia. The calculated risk the Kremlin took to shore up the PMAC prevented the disintegration of Ethiopia and helped consolidate the Soviet position in northeast Africa.

Colonel Mengistu visited Moscow in November 1978 (and several times since) and signed a twenty-year Soviet-Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The Soviet Union and Cuba had been pressing for the resolution of the Eritrean conflict through negotiations, with some guarantee of autonomy for Eritrea. However, the Soviets and Cuba helped launch the "Red Star" campaign of 1982, which failed to crush the Eritrean separatist guerrillas. Because of massive Soviet military aid, estimated at over \$2 billion, Ethiopia asserted military dominance in both Ogaden and Eritrea. Consequently, the emphasis of Ethiopian-Soviet relations shifted slightly from military aid to economic aid. According to a protocol signed on September 15, 1979, Soviet economic assistance included oil and gas exploration, expansion of the Aseb oil refinery, and construction of assembly and repair facilities for tractors and combine harvesters. The latest economic aid agreement was signed in September 1984 between Mengistu and the leader of the Soviet delegation to the Congress of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, Politburo member Grigory Romanov. The agreement provided for the building of two new major irrigation projects and the development of several light industries, including a cement plant and a textile plant. In accordance with the Ethiopian-Soviet economic aid agreement, the Nazret tractor assembly plant (near Addis Ababa), which started operation in September 1985, produced more than 700 tractors in the first six months of its operation; the Melka-Wakana hydroelectric plant on the Wabe Shebele River, with a projected power of 150 megawatts, was under construction; and prospecting for petroleum, natural gas, and other minerals was proceeding. Soviet aid for famine victims, which was much less than

Western aid, included 10,000 t. (11,000 tn.) of rice, 300 vehicles, and several aircraft, including helicopters.

The Ethiopian government has expressed its appreciation of Soviet support in various ways. The Soviet prime minister, Kosygin, was the guest of honor at the fifth anniversary celebration of the Ethiopian revolution in September 1979, and Mengistu was the guest of honor at the November 1980 celebration of the Russian Revolution. During Mengistu's 1985 pilgrimage to Moscow—from October 31 to November 9—where he attended the sixty-eighth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, both countries reaffirmed their readiness to continue developing bilateral ties in education, culture, and public health. The Ethiopian-Soviet communiqué issued at the end of this visit stated: "The two sides exchanged views on a broad range of international problems of mutual interest and reasserted the *complete identity* of views of both countries on the current major issues."⁴⁸ Mengistu has made a firm commitment to align Ethiopia with the Soviet Union. Ethiopia supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and was one of the eighteen nations that voted on January 14, 1980, and every year since, against a UN General Assembly resolution calling for the "immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of foreign troops in Afghanistan."⁴⁹ Ethiopia permitted the Soviet Union to establish a naval anchorage in the Dahlak Islands, 48 km. (30 mi.) off the Red Sea coast.⁵⁰ Ethiopia also joined the Soviet bloc in boycotting the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984. The formation of the WPE, at the urging of the Kremlin, was further indication of the strength of Ethiopian-Soviet relations and Ethiopia's drift into the Soviet camp. Commenting on the first Congress of the WPE, the Soviet news agency, TASS, stated, "relations between the Soviet Union and Ethiopia are developing on the sound basis of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. The creation of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia raised our cooperation to a new level."⁵¹

Cuba

Soviet aid to Ethiopia is part of its global policy as a superpower, but there are many questions about how Cuba, a poor country with only 10 million people, could project its military power to influence events decisively in Angola and Ethiopia. The most widely held explanation is that Cuban forces are surrogates for the Soviet Union, and they are responding to the wishes of the Kremlin, which subsidizes the Cuban economy. It is true that Soviet economic assistance and its formidable air and sea lift capability enabled Cuba to launch and sustain its military operations in Angola and Ethiopia. Cuban leaders, however, scoff at such allegations and indicate that their decision to intervene in both Angola and Ethiopia was made independently of the Soviet Union.⁵²

Because of its political and economic isolation in the Western Hemisphere, Cuba had sought to expand its diplomatic and economic relations in the Third World. Among Cuba's main foreign policy objectives are the support of national liberation movements and the defense of leftist "progressive" governments. Cuba has maintained diplomatic relations with thirty-one African countries and sustained a modest aid program in sixteen African countries. Cuba's military assistance to Angola and Ethiopia was, therefore, the culmination of many years of involvement in Africa.

Although Cuba and Ethiopia established diplomatic ties in July 1975, Cuba's involvement in Ethiopia began in March 1977, when Fidel Castro visited Ethiopia as part of his seven-nation tour of Africa, which took him to Angola, Algeria, Libya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Mozambique. Castro was briefed about the war in Eritrea, Ethiopia's failure to secure arms from the United States, and the Somali threat to invade the Ogaden. He was asked for military assistance to prevent the demise of Ethiopia's socialist revolution. Castro's proposal to avert an impending Somali invasion was a federation between the socialist regimes of Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Yemen, and he convened a meeting of the leaders of the three countries in Aden. The Somali view of the proposed socialist federation was that it would also include Djibouti and an independent Eritrea—but only after the Ogaden had joined Somalia or at least after the people of the Ogaden had been given the right to express their wishes on the issue of self-determination.⁵³ The Ethiopian government would consider federation only of sovereign states, and the conference adjourned in failure.

What Castro failed to grasp in his sincere but simplistic proposal was that national sentiments, which ran high both in Ethiopia and Somalia, took precedence over socialist and revolutionary commitments. For Somalis, the most sacred national objective has been "Greater Somalia." For Ethiopians, the maintenance of national unity has been a solemn duty. The two national objectives are on a collision course. For Castro, however, the main enemy to progress in Third World countries is imperialism, which could be averted only by expanding the alliance of socialist countries and the world revolutionary movement. He was impressed by the revolutionary euphoria of the beleaguered Ethiopian regime and just as much appalled by Somalia's aggressive tendencies against its neighbor, which made him question Somalia's commitment to Marxism. Thus, Castro threw his weight behind Ethiopia, as the Soviets had already started doing. In his commitment to defend the Ethiopian regime, Castro was risking a rupture in relations not only with Somalia, but with the EPLF, a Marxist group that had been embraced by Cuba and other socialist countries for many years.

After Mengistu signed a multimillion-dollar arms deal with the Soviet Union in May 1977, a small contingent of Cuban military advisors started arriving in Ethiopia. Somalia's invasion of Ogaden infuriated Castro, because he had received assurance from President Barre of Somalia at the Aden conference in March 1977 that Barre would not invade Ethiopia.⁵⁴ Consequently, Somalia and Cuba broke diplomatic relations in November 1977, which gave Cuba and the Soviet Union a free hand to increase their military aid to Ethiopia. By January 1978, over 12,000 Cuban troops had arrived in Ethiopia, and the successful counteroffensive against Somali forces was over in March 1978. In April, Mengistu flew to Havana to personally thank Castro for his military support and to discuss the possibility of Cuban assistance for the war in Eritrea. However, Castro could not be persuaded to send his forces against the EPLF, to which he had given aid in the early 1970s when the EPLF had been fighting against the emperor. He considered the Eritrean conflict an internal war and not an external aggression, as was the war in Ogaden. Thus, he urged a just political solution in which Eritrea is granted regional autonomy while preserving Ethiopia's territorial integrity.⁵⁵ Since 1979, Cuba and the Soviet Union have helped to organize an army of 300,000 and have indirectly contributed to Ethiopian military successes in Eritrea and Ogaden.

The Cuban president was the guest of honor during celebrations marking the fourth anniversary of military rule on September 12, 1978. At the nonaligned summit held in Havana on September 1979, the Ethiopian leader decorated many Cuban soldiers for their services in Ethiopia. By the end of 1985, about 2,500 Cuban troops remained in Ethiopia out of a total of about 12,000. Most Cuban troops, many of whom had been stationed in the Ogaden, were withdrawn because of a reduced level of fighting in the region and also partly for economic reasons relating to the cost of maintaining the Cuban presence in Ethiopia.⁵⁶ Although Cuban assistance to Ethiopia was heavily military, since 1980 assistance has focused on education, health, agriculture, and mining.

Relations with Other Socialist Countries

East Germany is the third most active aid donor to leftist regimes in Africa. Its interest in Africa developed out of its quest for legitimacy in its competition against West Germany for influence in the Third World.⁵⁷ Consequently, it actively supported African liberation movements and provided military and technical assistance to several African countries.

East Germany provided military and economic aid to Ethiopia after 1977, under a variety of aid agreements. The most important of these

was a twenty-year economic and military aid agreement signed during the visit of East German leader Erich Honecker in November 1979. In late 1984, East German aircraft flew into Ethiopia with 20 t. (22 tn.) of powdered milk and medical supplies as part of \$7 million in aid for famine victims. There were several hundred East German specialists in Ethiopia, many of them associated with organizing the civil and secret police and training government and party cadres.

Other Eastern European countries offered diverse types of aid, based primarily on ideological grounds as opposed to strategic and economic interests, an indication of the high degree of coordination among the USSR, Cuba, and other socialist countries to assist in Ethiopia's costly transition to socialism.⁵⁸ North Korea recently joined the list of Communist countries providing economic aid to Ethiopia.

Relations between Ethiopia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) began in 1971, after the emperor's visit there in 1970. Ethiopia's participation in the Korean War (1951–1954), its alignment with the West, and its vote at the UN against PRC membership had prevented diplomatic ties between the two countries. After 1960, Ethiopia voted in favor of the admission of the PRC into the UN. In 1964 Prime Minister Chou En Lai visited Ethiopia as part of his tour of African countries.

Relations between the military government and the PRC were good until 1977, when the Soviet Union supported Ethiopia during the Somali invasion of Ogaden. The PRC's decision to support Somalia angered the Ethiopian government, which condemned the Chinese leadership as anti-Marxist and reactionary. Chinese interest in the Horn of Africa is minimal, and their hostility toward Ethiopia was governed not by the merits of the issues, but by their hostility toward the Soviet Union. The failure of the United States and its allies to react to Soviet success in Ethiopia was instrumental in the Chinese attempt to strengthen ties with Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia, three countries that repealed treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union. In spite of the rocky relationship between Ethiopia and the PRC, during the early years of Ethiopia's revolution a team of Chinese engineers helped complete the construction of a 295-km. (183-mi.) road that crosses a rough terrain connecting Weldiya in Welo to Werota in Gonder. Relations have markedly improved since a high-level Ethiopian delegation visited the PRC in January 1984.

SUMMARY

Ethiopia's location on the margins of the Middle East, its historical background, its religion and ideology have shaped its international relations. As a nation that escaped colonization (except for a brief period during 1935–1941), Ethiopia championed the causes of Pan-Africanism

and African independence. Consequently, Ethiopia has enjoyed good relations with sub-Saharan African countries who have supported Ethiopia's quest to maintain its territorial integrity and its right to align itself with the socialist bloc. Ethiopia and Kenya enjoy close relations, despite their ideological differences, which reflects their mutual interests and the Pan-Somali threat common to them both. Relations with Djibouti are good, but there have been periodic strains in Ethiopian-Sudanese relations.

Ethiopia's proximity to the Middle East, its identity as a Christian state in an area dominated by Islam, have affected its relations with the Arab world. The major bone of contention, until recently, had been the separatist movement in Eritrea, which thrived on Arab support. An independent Eritrea would create a landlocked Ethiopia, a situation that arouses historical Ethiopian fears of Muslim encirclement.

Ethiopia's alignment with the Soviet Union since the 1974 revolution, its break of ties with Israel, and its recognition of the PLO helped improve its relations with radical Arab regimes such as Libya, Syria, and South Yemen. However, conservative Arab regimes denounced Ethiopia for its alliance with the socialist bloc. Because it has been difficult to maintain uniformly friendly relations with the Arab world, Ethiopia has concentrated on improving relations with neighboring Arab countries, partly to minimize support for Eritrean separatists.

Ethiopia's declaration of socialism put a strain on its relations with the United States. Failure of the United States to respond to Ethiopia's request for military aid forced Ethiopia to align itself with the Soviet Union, which in the process forfeited its alliance with Somalia. Although Ethiopia appears firmly in the Soviet sphere, economic difficulties have made it turn to the West, which has responded sympathetically. This has added to speculation that the Western alliance may use its economic aid to lure Ethiopia away from the Soviet orbit.

In spite of radical changes in its domestic affairs and a radical shift in alliance from the United States to the Soviet bloc, Ethiopia's major foreign policy objectives have not deviated significantly from that of the imperial government. The principle of nonalignment, active involvement in African affairs, the need to minimize the negative impact of Arab nationalism, the importance of maintaining direct access to the sea, and the search for a major power with which to align have remained central in Ethiopia's relations with the international community.

NOTES

1. For a background of factors affecting Ethiopia's international relations prior to the revolution of 1974, see John H. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay: A Personal*

Account of the Haile Selassie Years (Algonac, Mich.: Reference Publications, 1984), and Harold G. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States, 1941–1974* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). See also Mesfin Wolde Mariam, "Ethiopia and the Indian Ocean," in A.J. Cottrell and R.M. Burrell, eds., *The Indian Ocean: Its Political, Economic and Military Importance* (New York: Praeger, 1972), pp. 181–196; and Negussay Ayele, "The Foreign Policy of Ethiopia," in Olajide Aluko, ed., *The Foreign Policies of African States* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), pp. 46–71.

2. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, p. 153.

3. Ibid., p. 154.

4. Ibid., p. 104.

5. Access to the sea was a cherished objective of the emperor. See Edward Ullendorff, ed. and trans., *The Autobiography of Emperor Haile Selassie I: My Life and Ethiopia's Progress 1892–1937* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 93–146.

6. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 155, 306–309.

7. Proclamation No. 1, *Negarit Gazetta*, September 1974. For a summary of Ethiopia's foreign policy since 1977, see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "What Should Ethiopia's Guiding Foreign Policy Be at the Present Time?" *Horn of Africa* 4:2 (1981), pp. 59–61.

8. Catherine Hoskyns, *Case Studies in African Diplomacy: The Ethiopia-Somali-Kenya Dispute 1960–1967* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 79.

9. *Africa Report* 17:9 (December 1971), p. 25. His view contradicts not only his later action, but he immediately set himself the task of building one of the largest armies in sub-Saharan Africa.

10. For short-term events that precipitated the 1977–1978 war between the two countries, see Robert Gorman, *Political Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1981), pp. 51–72.

11. See Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Crossed Wires," *Newsweek*, September 26, 1977, pp. 42–43, and Joseph Kraft, "Somalia's Case Against the U.S.," *Washington Post*, April 18, 1978.

12. Merritt Robbins, "The Soviet-Cuban Relationship," in R.E. Kanet, ed., *Soviet Foreign Policy in the 1980s* (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 161. See also David D. Laitin and Said S. Samatar, *Somalia: Nation in Search of a State* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987), p. 142.

13. See *New York Times*, April 10, 1978, p. A1, and *Washington Post*, April 13, 1978, p. A18.

14. *Africa Research Bulletin, Political, Cultural and Social Series* 20:8 (September 1983), p. 6925.

15. Population Reference Bureau (PRB), *Population Today* 14:3 (March 1986), p. 4.

16. *Africa Confidential* 27:5 (February 26, 1986), pp. 6–7.

17. *Africa Research Bulletin, Political, Cultural and Social Series* 20:1 (February 1983), p. 6695.

18. *Washington Post*, April 13, 1978, p. A18.

19. *Africa Research Bulletin, Political, Cultural and Social Series* 18:3 (March 1981), p. 5983.

20. Jay Ross and David Ottaway, "Egypt, Sudan Seen Pledging Military Help to Somalia," *Washington Post*, January 27, 1978.

21. *Africa Contemporary Record* 14 (1981-1982), pp. 169-170.

22. *New York Times*, July 10, 1985, pp. A1, A9.

23. This appears to be a long-cherished dream of Arabs. See John Franklin Campbell, "Rumblings Along the Red Sea: The Eritrean Question," *Foreign Affairs* 48:3 (April 1970), pp. 543-544. For a more recent view, see Haggai Erlich, *The Struggle over Eritrea, 1962-1978* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983), pp. 79-84.

24. Although official diplomatic ties between Ethiopia and Israel were severed in 1973, Israel continued to secretly provide military assistance to Ethiopia until 1978. See Colin Legum and Bill Lee, *The Horn of Africa in Continuing Crisis* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1979), p. 58.

25. For details see Memorandum from Wallace Murray to Dean Acheson et al., Washington, D.C., November 20, 1942. Quoted in Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States*, pp. 14-15.

26. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 159-160, and Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States*, pp. 50-52.

27. Marcus, *Ethiopia, Great Britain and the United States*, p. 5.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

29. U.S., Congress, Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, *Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1976), p. 1.

30. U.S., Congress, Senate Committee on International Relations, *War in the Horn of Africa: A Firsthand Report on the Challenge for United States Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1978), p. 29.

31. *Washington Post*, March 5, 1978, p. 10.

32. Spencer, *Ethiopia at Bay*, pp. 345-346.

33. A precondition for Soviet aid was that Ethiopia break ties with the United States. See Marina Ottaway and David Ottaway, *Ethiopia: Empire in Revolution* (New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1978), pp. 166-168.

34. U.S., Department of State, "Horn of Africa," Current Policy No. 141, February 15, 1980, p. 1.

35. "Arming America's Friends," *Newsweek*, March 23, 1981, p. 33.

36. Antony Shaw, "Barre's Balancing Act," *Africa Report* 30:6 (November-December, 1985), p. 28.

37. See Clifford D. May, "U.S. Will Give Development Aid to Ethiopia Under New Law," *New York Times*, May 9, 1985.

38. *Washington Post*, December 21, 1985, p. A15.

39. According to *Africa Business* (April 1986), pp. 21-22, "there is evidence to suggest that the Villagization is being implemented by force, that it is disrupting agricultural production, and that it is absorbing scarce labor and other resources." See also *Africa Report* 30:1 (January-February 1986), pp. 36-37; *Washington Post*, June 10, 1986, p. A23.

40. PMAC, *May Day Address Delivered to the Entire Masses of the Ethiopian People by Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam*, Addis Ababa, May 1985.

41. U.S., General Accounting Office, *The U.S. Response to the Ethiopian Food Crisis* GAO/NSIAD/85-65, April 8, 1985.
42. *Washington Post*, September 11, 1985.
43. Jack Shepherd, "Changing Equations in the Horn," *Africa Report* 30:6 (November-December, 1985), p. 25.
44. *Washington Post*, May 20, 1986, p. A28. See also *Time*, August 4, 1986, p. 34.
45. *Africa News* 16:17 (April 27, 1981), pp. 6-7.
46. Legum and Lee, *The Horn of Africa in Continuing Crisis*, p. 50.
47. See R. Remnek, "Soviet Policy in the Horn of Africa: The Decision to Intervene," in R.H. Donaldson, ed., *The Soviet Union in the Third World: Successes and Failures* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 125-149. For the evolution of Soviet policy in Ethiopia, see Marina Ottaway, *Soviet and American Influence in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 138, and Fred Halliday, *Soviet Policy in the Arc of Crisis* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1981), pp. 95-98.
48. *Ethiopian Herald*, November 12, 1985, p. 5 (emphasis added).
49. Colin Legum and Bill Lee, "The Horn of Africa: The Widening Conflict," *Africa Contemporary Record* 12 (1979-1980), p. A46; *Washington Post*, November 14, 1985, p. A37.
50. Robbins, "The Soviet-Cuban Relationship," p. 160.
51. *Africa Research Bulletin, Political, Cultural and Social Series* 21:9 (October 1984), p. 7371.
52. William M. LeoGrande, "Cuban-Soviet Relations and Cuban Policy in Africa," *Cuban Studies* 10:1 (January 1980), pp. 5-29. See also Zdenek Cervenka and Colin Legum, "Cuba: The New Communist Power in Africa," in Legum and Lee, *The Horn of Africa in Continuing Crisis*, p. 139. This view is also supported by Arkady N. Shevchenko, a former senior Soviet official at the United Nations who later defected to the United States; see his *Breaking with Moscow* (New York: Knopf, 1985), pp. 272-273.
53. Cervenka and Legum, "Cuba: The New Communist Power in Africa," p. 143.
54. Arthur Gavshon, *Crisis in Africa: Battleground of East and West* (New York: Pelican Books, 1981), p. 107.
55. LeoGrande, "Cuban-Soviet Relations," p. 28; Nelson P. Valdes, "Cuban Foreign Policy in the Horn of Africa," *Cuban Studies* 10:1 (January 1980), p. 69. For an Eritrean view about Soviet and Cuban abandonment of the EPLF, see a rejoinder to the Valdes and Leo Grande articles in *Cuban Studies* 10:1 (January 1980), pp. 80-85.
56. *Africa Contemporary Record* 16 (1983-1984), p. B148.
57. "East Germans Look to Africa," *Washington Post*, July 8, 1978.
58. Robbins, "The Soviet-Cuban Relationship," p. 162.

7

Prospects for Change and Stability

In 1974 Ethiopia was swept by a major revolution that brought about profound social, economic, and political changes. The PMAC, with the enthusiastic support of many revolutionary groups, committed itself to the task of catapulting Ethiopia from its condition as a feudal-capitalist state to that of a socialist state in a short span of time. It set as its goal the principle of *Ethiopia Tikdem* (Ethiopia First) and, in a burst of laws and decrees unprecedented in Ethiopia, began the social economic, and political transformation of the country. Since 1974 major structural reforms have affected urban and rural landownership, the educational system, the role of the private sector in the economy, the government bureaucracy, and mass participation in local government through rural and urban associations.

The 1974 military intervention was unique in Ethiopian history. First, although some groups in the military had been involved in the 1960 attempted coup d'état, this was the first time the armed forces had acted as an institution to seize control of the state. The *Derg*, once it assumed power, proceeded to institute far-ranging reforms. Second, although the military adopted a political program that had been articulated by progressive sectors for more than a decade, it was able to implement the reform in a far more radical manner than most Ethiopians had expected. Finally, the *Derg* acted out of extreme nationalism and vigorously pursued its reform programs to eradicate the feudal system that had perpetuated Ethiopia's underdevelopment.¹

In the early days of the revolution, the *Derg* instituted various repressive policies against opposition groups. It viewed any challenge to its power as a move to enfeeble the military establishment. The PMAC dissolved unions and rival political organizations, persecuted their leaders, and abolished civil liberties and all channels of organized civilian political activity. Such measures effectively eliminated opposition

groups and helped Mengistu consolidate his power. He emerged as the unchallenged strongman of the group and, with a few key officers, has unequivocally demonstrated his intentions to change Ethiopia into a socialist state.

Although some may characterize the years of military rule as an era of dictatorial rule, administrative incompetence, and rampant corruption, credit must be given to the PMAC for major achievements in land reform (rural and urban), education, and bureaucratic reorganization. Perhaps more important, the PMAC was successful in conferring some power on the masses through peasant and urban dwellers' associations. In this concluding chapter, we shall examine four major issues that are important to Ethiopian development: prospects for democracy and national unity, prospects for economic development, prospects for reducing regional tension, and prospects for a viable socialist Ethiopia.

PROSPECTS FOR DEMOCRACY AND NATIONAL UNITY

The military government was originally designated as "provisional," but with the declaration of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia in 1984, it has conferred permanence and legitimacy on itself. Most of the top military leaders, except those in active military service, have exchanged their uniforms for civilian suits and their military ranks for the title of "comrade." The *Derg* led everyone to believe that military rule would only be a transitional phase ultimately leading to a civilian-led representative government. Thus, the PMAC's version of a people's government must be viewed as a ploy designed by the military to retain power.

The PMAC established its own foundation of support through COPWE in mass organizations such as the All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU), the All-Ethiopia Peasant Association (AEPA), the Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association (REWA), and the Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association (REYA). These organizations were created as a prelude to the launching of a Communist political party. The WPE was inaugurated in September 1984 after more than four years of propaganda and ideological work among the population. A draft constitution to establish a People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been distributed to the general public for review. The constitution was broadcast over radio stations in several languages and presented at over 25,000 locations throughout the country. In a referendum held in February 1987, the constitution was approved by 81 percent of the registered voters. The final step will be the declaration of the republic.

The party structure, which calls for mass participation, begins at residences and workplaces and is eventually expected to control all national activities. The organization of the WPE appears to give the

people some power over their affairs at the local level. It is too early to tell how far the regime and the party structure will go in permitting progressive programs and democratic dialogues. The party is similar to Soviet and East European parties, which have little to show for their progressive programs and even less for their democratic accomplishments. However, if the regime's expressed desire to encourage local autonomy and participatory democracy materializes, it will be an impressive achievement for the government.

Although the party system may permit local autonomy, the people's role at the national level may be negligible. According to the party rules, the Congress of the WPE (which meets once in five years) is the supreme body of the WPE. The party rules also state that power emanates from the people and flows to the Congress, the Central Committee, and the Politburo. In actual fact, power is concentrated in the hands of Mengistu, and the membership of both the Politburo and the Central Committee of the WPE is appointed by Secretary General Mengistu and serves at his pleasure.

The government has stabilized after several years of turmoil. The regime derives power from the military, which includes most members of the ruling oligarchy; thus, the possibility of a challenge to Mengistu is very low. Promotions, pay raises, and active roles in government for the military leadership has raised its stake in the military-dominated regime. Within the ranks, although the soldiers are war-weary from combat duty in various parts of the country, persistent indoctrination under the watchful eyes of the military commissariat and periodic pay raises may have blunted overt opposition to the regime. Civilian opposition does not dare raise voices critical of the regime, as the penalty for such acts is severe. The regime's judicial system and the party apparatus are primarily designed to intimidate opposition elements as part of the *Derg's* overall plan to consolidate power. This strategy appears to have been successful.

However, ethnic-based opposition to the regime is widespread, and none of the major transport arteries is safe from guerrilla attacks. But the opposition is fragmented because each group has a different reason and objective in opposing the regime: Some want to secede, others want to overthrow the government, and still others oppose its policies. The only credible threat to the regime could come from a possible alliance between remnants of former opposition groups, such as the small and loosely organized Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), and the well-organized opponents of the regime, such as the Tigray People's Liberation Front. The EPDM and the TPLF began to cooperate in 1984 and have succeeded in extending their base of operations into government-controlled areas in southern Welo and northern Shewa. If

the TPLF categorically rejected secession and concentrated its effort on overthrowing the regime, it could attract a large number of non-Tigrean followers who have been alienated by the regime. If the opposition could coalesce, large sections of the northern provinces, where government control is tenuous and where the people are hungry and tired of war, could easily fall into opposition hands. Unless the separate opposition groups cooperate, they are no match for the regime.

One of the major failures of the military government has been its disastrous policy on national integration. This almost led to the breakup of Ethiopia during the period 1977–1978 and was averted by timely military aid from Cuba and the Soviet Union. The PMAC's suppression of democratic hopes and aspirations in its first year generated political instability that encouraged the proliferation of ethnic "liberation fronts" as well as the Somali-inspired irredentist movement in Ogaden, where guerrilla activity is still widespread. Several major military campaigns since 1978 against the Eritrean and Tigray liberation movements have failed to resolve the conflict although over half of Ethiopia's army was engaged in the fighting in the region. The Oromo Liberation Front has yet to become a major threat. These ethnic rebellions have led to the displacement of about 2 million Ethiopian refugees, who have fled to Somalia, Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya. There are an additional 1 million people who have been displaced from their communities by war, recurring drought, and famine.

To contain ethnic separatists and to enhance the defense posture of the country, the size of the military has been expanded from about 50,000 in 1974 to an estimated 300,000 in 1983, including 150,000 in people's militias. In addition, the PMAC issued a decree in May 1983 requiring all nationals between the ages of eighteen and thirty to register for two years of military service and all able-bodied citizens under fifty to be trained as reservists in the defense forces. This decree is an indication of the government's continued reliance on military force to achieve national unity. The regime has failed to break the backs of ethnic separatist movements in spite of enormous advantages in personnel and armaments. Every failure by the regime to crush the guerrillas is an incentive for them to continue their campaigns, and a long, drawn-out conflict will dim prospects for a negotiated settlement. If the conflicts remain unresolved, the enormous cost in human lives and resources will sap the vitality of the nation.

There are no formulas for national unity. The most widely accepted approach to ethnic/communal coexistence is a democratic system with some form of autonomy and/or federation. The essence of a democratic system is that it allows a free and open flow of ideas for bargain and compromise on ethnic/communal needs and aspirations. A democratic

system that guarantees some degree of autonomy and in which communal groups can have a voice in influencing decisions that affect their daily lives, accompanied by an improvement in economic well-being, would be a major step toward national unity and would help bind the wounds of the nation. However, although the military has shown its ability to overthrow the government, it has not demonstrated a capacity to resolve the problems of ethnicity and economic stagnation that confronted previous civilian governments. Military governments have usually resorted to violence and repression rather than bargaining and compromise. Unless the PMAC is willing to consider the rights and aspirations of individuals and communal/ethnic groups, it is unlikely that Ethiopia's military-dominated and Communist-inspired regime can be a vanguard for a democratic system.

PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

After several years of military rule and some impressive achievements, most of the hopes of the revolution have yet to be realized. The government has implemented Africa's most ambitious land reform program, which has destroyed the power base of the old guard and brought benefits to the rural population, particularly in the south. The adult literacy campaign has been deservedly acclaimed. Rural and urban areas are organized into a hierarchy of associations permitting both farmers and urban residents the opportunity to participate in decisions about local matters.

On the other hand, the government has failed to improve the general economic conditions of the country. About 7.7 million Ethiopians (according to UN estimates) are threatened by starvation; urban workers and residents are faced with shortages of necessities and escalating cost of living; unemployment has reached an alarming level; the balance of payments has deteriorated; and the expanded state apparatus has increasingly prevented the private sector from participating in the economic activity of the nation. Some of these problems are not the results of the military's action alone; rather, they are related to the persistent drought that has affected Ethiopia since 1974 and to the ensuing international economic crisis. But the government has also failed to give attention to economic goals; many of the nation's resources are directed toward the war effort (in Ogaden and Eritrea) and the elimination of opposition groups.

Various reform policies—including nationalization of financial institutions, banks, and industries—have alienated the upper class. The wholesale transfer of ownership of urban land and extra houses from individuals to the state has discouraged private investment in housing,

which has led to a severe housing shortage. The agricultural policy has failed to produce enough food to meet the basic needs of the population. A major share of the agricultural budget is used for subsidizing state farms, whereas peasants receive no fertilizers, improved seeds, and other services that are critical in improving agriculture. With no new capital investment, manufacturing industries have exhausted their capacities and, therefore, are unable to meet the rising demand for consumer goods or construction materials. Some of the manufacturing industries are "staffed" with redundant labor as a result of government pressure to absorb workers assigned by the employment department.

To give direction to national economic development and to marshal resources, the PMAC has launched a planning process under the Central Planning Supreme Council (CPSC). The first ten-year development plan (1984/85—1993/94) was inaugurated in September 1984. Although the plan has identified some impressive goals and objectives, it has also set overly optimistic targets that will be difficult to achieve, given the country's limited resources. For instance, the plan projects overall economic growth at 6.5 percent per annum; Ethiopia's economy between 1973–1984, according to the World Bank, grew at an average annual rate of 2.3 percent, and per capita GDP declined by 0.2 percent during the same period. The plan envisages an investment of \$15 billion, of which 45 percent is expected to be financed by external sources. It is unrealistic to achieve the projected growth rate when past trends have shown that Ethiopia's economy has experienced tremendous problems related to drought, poor government policy, and unfavorable political climate.

PROSPECTS FOR REDUCING REGIONAL TENSION

Ethiopia's relations with the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc have not affected its relations with the rest of Africa. There was some concern after 1977 that Ethiopia might be a Trojan horse for Soviet infiltration and subversion into the region, although the Ethiopian regime gave assurances to its neighbors in 1979 that its revolution was not aimed against them. However, Ethiopia is supporting Somali dissidents and southern Sudanese dissidents in retaliation against the Somali and Sudanese governments for their support of Ethiopian separatist and opposition groups.

The superpower alignment and realignment following the Ethiopian revolution magnified the conflict in the Horn of Africa. The United States and the Soviet Union were dragged into the regional conflict by ideological and strategic concerns. There are strong indications that Ethiopia's military and ideological needs may dictate close ties with the

Soviet Union for many years. First, the present leadership derives strong Soviet support in these areas. Mengistu's demise may bring to power a leadership not as friendly to the Soviet Union. However, as virtually all organized opposition to Mengistu or the regime has been decimated, the chances for a change of leadership are slim, thus guaranteeing strong Soviet presence. Second, Ethiopia relies on massive Soviet military aid to contain ethnic separatist movements that continue to engage a large percent of the armed forces. The government's determination to rely on a military solution (in spite of a Soviet push for a negotiated settlement at least in Eritrea) would further guarantee continued Soviet presence. Third, as long as the United States continues to provide military aid to Egypt and Somalia and continues to participate in joint exercises with its Rapid Deployment Force, Ethiopia will feel threatened by U.S. military activity in the region and will seek the Soviet military umbrella, further entrenching the Soviet presence in Ethiopia. Fourth, it is in the best interests of the Soviet Union to reciprocate Ethiopia's ideological and military needs, although this could intensify superpower rivalry in the region.

In the final analysis, military aid alone will not be enough to sustain Ethiopian-Soviet relations. The Soviet Union must help Ethiopia improve its economy and prove to other developing countries that the Marxist/socialist model is a viable alternative for social change in the Third World. The Soviets have always argued that imperialism and capitalism were/are responsible for Africa's backwardness and that an association with "world socialism" was the panacea for the continent's problems. The Soviets have to back their statements with economic aid to Ethiopia. Ethiopia's economic failure would reflect badly on the Soviet Union and could cost them their strategic foothold in that country.

PROSPECTS FOR A VIABLE SOCIALIST ETHIOPIA

In a report to the first congress of COPWE in 1980 Mengistu highlighted three pressing tasks for the early phase of the revolution.² The first was the expedition of the transformation from private to public ownership of the means of production. The second task included the establishment of a workers' party, and the third was economic development through the organization of state farms and cooperatives and the promotion of major industries.

All three elements are central to socialist development. Indeed, through a barrage of legislation, public ownership in Ethiopia has replaced private ownership in such key areas as urban and rural land, industries, financial institutions, and a significant share of transportation and commerce. In September 1984, the PMAC announced the formation of

the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, although it is a party dominated by the military. It is the third objective, economic development, that has doggedly hampered Ethiopia's transition to socialism.

Public ownership may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the achievement of socialism. The transition to socialism is ultimately a far more complex process than most advocates of socialism would like to admit. To understand the process, it is necessary to reflect on the theoretical framework and experiences of other nations. Socialism does not require the immediate elimination of private ownership or of the market; instead, it advocates the progressive phasing out of these elements. Thus, socialist economic programs often incorporate a mix of private, collective, and state ownership forms in the initial stage, with progressive restriction of the private sector. Advocates of socialism argue that state ownership of the means of production, besides eliminating exploitation rooted in private ownership, can (1) make possible equitable implementation of the socialist principle of remuneration based on labor from each according to his or her need, to each according to his or her work and (2) provide a framework within which economic planning may be implemented to accelerate the process of economic development. But although the changes may be fundamental, the critical element in building a socialist state is the pace of change. If a socialist program is to rest on popular support rather than state coercion, the pace of change must be governed by a complex calculus involving, among other things, popular consciousness, a balance of class as well as regional interests, the capacity of the state to manage the economy, and the level of economic development of the nation. The history of socialist experiments in Tanzania, Ghana, Poland, and China, particularly their programs of collectivization, are littered with the corpses of premature or miscalculated changes that resulted in disastrous consequences. In many cases the states resorted to large-scale coercions to maintain the system.³

Other problems arise from the various contradictions that characterize the transition to socialism. Victor Lippit, in his discussion on the dynamics of socialist development in China, identifies four major contradictions that have become anathema to socialist development.⁴ It is essential to examine the extent to which these contradictions have been resolved in Ethiopia's transition to socialism.

The first contradiction, that between producers and the societal interest, plagues many public enterprises in Ethiopia. In the early days of the revolution, the PMAC planted representatives in public enterprises as well as in government offices to serve as "eyes and ears" of the revolution. These individuals, now replaced by cadres and party representatives, often interfered in decisions made by managers. At the same time, the PMAC handed down orders and guidelines that removed

decision-making power from the enterprise level. Public enterprise managers found themselves passive implementers of government decisions. For instance, in an apparent attempt to reduce unemployment, public enterprises were pressured into increasing their level of employment, often at the expense of efficiency. Between 1975 and 1982, despite the lack of new capital investment and the poor production record, employment in public sector manufacturing industries increased by 57 percent. Consequently, average labor cost in public enterprises was higher than in private enterprises. In the long run, the practice of labor "staffing" will seriously harm the efficiency of the firms.

With the introduction of central planning, decision-making power at the enterprise level found itself hampered by directives and policies emanating from the central planning office, which claims to represent the social interest. If this contradiction between the producers and the state is to be resolved, the latter should leave the decision-making authority to the producing units (in agriculture as well as industry), who should ultimately be held responsible for their actions. Such authority should include not only production but also marketing of outputs. The planning system should establish only the broad national priorities and parameters of economic activity.

The second contradiction is posed by the existing disparity between the consciousness of the masses and that of the leaders, a disparity that is complicated by the measures taken by the leaders to raise the level of consciousness of the masses. During the early days of the revolution, the PMAC ordered "study groups" to be organized at workplaces, within *kebeles*, and within peasant associations. These were to be held twice a week. Attendance became mandatory as workers and peasants began to show lack of interest in the sessions, which they viewed as thought control by self-defined elites. PMAC members and their representatives assumed the responsibility for determining what was "correct" thought and decided who were the "true" socialists. Those who held views contrary to the official line were accused of being reactionaries and, in some cases, enemies of the revolution; the latter accusation often resulted in death. Those who believed in the principles of socialism, but did not necessarily agree on the path taken or tactics used to realize the objectives, were alienated, labeled as "capitalist-roaders," and often suppressed. Many perished during the height of the revolution, when individuals identified as "misguided" were required to confess their activities in public. Although consciousness-raising may be important to socialist transition, the means used to raise consciousness is open to abuse. The measures and tactics of the PMAC and cadre members at workplaces, farms, and neighborhood associations created resentment among the masses.

The third contradiction, that between the leaders and the masses, according to Lippit, develops as party members and the bureaucratic stratum form a distinct privileged class by using their preferential access to power and the resources of the state. In some cases, this special status could be a source of personal enrichment and a means of access to important services and opportunities such as better housing, better schools, and employment for families and friends, opportunities that are usually beyond the reach of the ordinary people. This development perpetuates a vicious circle of inequality. The widening gap between this class and the ordinary people is a major source of dissatisfaction for the general population and an impediment to the transition to socialism. The extent to which the activities of the new class has affected the transition to socialism in Ethiopia is difficult to assess, although several cases have been reported of abuse of power and trust among senior officials.⁵ In 1983 at the second Congress of COPWE, Mengistu revealed that "thirty-four individuals were expelled from membership for indulging in activities detrimental to the objectives of COPWE as well as for failure to live up to the responsibilities entrusted to them."⁶ The PMAC has created a control commission whose primary responsibility is to investigate reports of personal enrichment or abuse of trust by those in power. Although such an institution might help to reduce corruption and minimize abuse of power, it also has the potential of discouraging decision-makers from taking independent actions for fear of being accused of exceeding their authority or abusing trust. A delicate balance must be maintained between real abuse of power and oversight or misjudgment.

The fourth contradiction is that between the forces and relations of production. The state encourages farmers and workers to increase output, but at the same time it fails to reward the productive worker by downplaying material incentives and emphasizing equality. The system's failure to link remuneration to effort benefits primarily those who are lazy and cynical. Thus, a dilemma exists between the principle of compensation according to productivity, which could create spontaneous inequality, and the socialist objective of equality as a means of creating a classless society. Unlike Mao's China, where the contradiction between the forces and relations of production intensified as the state dismissed the relevance of the market system and material incentives, the government in Ethiopia recognizes the importance of these two elements. Developments in Ethiopia indicate that, after several years of appeals to increase productivity, the state has now ordered managers of state enterprises to introduce an incentive system in which producers will be rewarded for surpassing set targets. Some managers are also being made responsible for their own economic decisions, although many

are still guided by decisions made at higher levels, outside of the enterprise.⁷ In higher education, examination results, rather than class origin, are now used as criteria for admission.

There are several areas in which the state has uncritically accepted failed socialist policies. The government's periodic interference in the market mechanism is partly responsible for the failure of farmers to increase productivity and bring their produce to the market. Distortions in farm prices and increasing interest in black markets are largely the result of the government's control of domestic as well as foreign trade. Private sector activities in the industrial and commercial areas are regarded with suspicion and inhibited from flourishing. In a nation with few financial resources, reliance on the public sector to bear the burden of increasing economic development is a misguided policy; the government needs to create an environment conducive to both domestic and foreign private investment. In agriculture, private farms are being forced into collectives, and the national plan has set as its target the collectivization of over 50 percent of the farms by 1994. At a time when socialist agriculture has failed in Tanzania, when the Soviet Union, the oldest socialist state, has been plagued with chronic food shortages, and China has begun to restore private plots and to subcontract large collective farms to individuals and production teams under the new "production responsibility" system, it is inconceivable to expect anything but profound failure from Ethiopia's uncritical acceptance of socialist agricultural policies. In fact, the recent famine is explained partly by the government's emphasis on state farms (which have failed in both Ghana and Tanzania) and its failure to pay adequate prices to farmers for their produce.

Ethiopia's socialism has important achievements to its credit, as well as profound failures. The regime has begun to learn from its own mistakes and from the experiences of other nations where the path to socialism has been hampered by these contradictions. Although attempts are being made to find new resolutions for each of the contradictions, much remains to be done and "reform" on many fronts is needed. The government must create a popular foundation for institutional change. It must improve social and political conditions by removing the climate of fear and repression that has engulfed the Ethiopian society. It must heal the wounds of the nation by resolving the question of nationalities, granting local autonomy under a democratic system that promotes the needs and aspirations of the various ethnic/communal groups. It must create a genuine representative government in which participatory democracy can become a reality. It must revamp the economic system by improving the efficiency of farms and manufacturing enterprises. And finally, it must raise the standard of living of the people by promoting

overall economic development. The viability of socialist Ethiopia rests on the successful implementation of these reforms.

NOTES

1. A few writers argue that the military stumbled into the situation when a power vacuum was created. However, it must be noted that it was extreme nationalism rather than ideological commitment that glued the members together in spite of individual and, in some cases, group differences. See Paul Henze, "Behind the Ethiopian Famine: Anatomy of a Revolution (III)," *Encounter* 67:3 (September-October 1986), p. 22.

2. COPWE, *First Congress of COPWE*, Addis Ababa, June 16, 1980.

3. See Goran Hayden's interesting case study of Tanzania, *Beyond Ujamaa in Tanzania* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980).

4. See Victor Lippit, "Socialist Development in China," in Mark Seldon and Victor Lippit, eds., *Transition to Socialism in China* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1982), p. 132. For a general analysis of the transition to socialism in Ethiopia, see Fred Halliday and Maxine Molyneux, *The Ethiopian Revolution* (London: Verso, 1981), pp. 268-283. For a recent assessment of the accomplishments of the revolution, see Paul Henze, "Behind the Ethiopian Famine: Anatomy of a Revolution, Parts I, II, and III," *Encounter* 67:1, 2, 3 (May-June, July-August, September-October 1986), pp. 5-17, 15-27, 20-31.

5. For instance, in 1980 Demissie Deressa and Abate Mersha, both *Derg* members, were accused of financial corruption and sentenced to twenty years of hard labor. See Pliny the Middle-Aged, "The Lives and Times of the *Derg*," *Northeast African Studies* 5:3 (1983-1984), pp. 27-28 and 37.

6. COPWE, *Documents and Resolutions of the Second COPWE Congress*, Addis Ababa, January 1983, p. 16.

7. Keith Griffin and Roger Hay, "Problems of Agricultural Development in Socialist Ethiopia," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 13:1 (October 1985), p. 56.

Appendix: Programme of the National Democratic Revolution (PNDR) of Ethiopia

Authors' note: On April 20, 1976, Chairman Mengistu announced the PNDR during a mass demonstration. The objective of the program, according to the chairman, was to pave the way for "scientific socialism" and a "people's democratic republic." Following is the PNDR's full text.

INTRODUCTION

In order to advance the revolution of the broad masses of Ethiopia and guide it towards its ultimate goal, it is necessary to start from a correct understanding of Ethiopia's current reality. The character of the revolution at this stage and its future course must be known. The class enemies and class friends of the revolution must also be correctly distinguished. The nature of the Ethiopian society is semi-feudal and semi-capitalist and as such its basic problems originate from feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism, the product of these twin forces. These three determine the nature of the present Ethiopian society and its various manifestations.

The Ethiopian people have waged a continuous struggle against their class enemies for a long time. This struggle attained a new and radical form in February 1974. Since then, it has been proceeding at a great momentum. Yet, it cannot be said that contradictions between the peasantry and the feudal class, between the working class and the bourgeoisie, between Ethiopia's broad masses and imperialism has been resolved. In addition, contradictions among nationalities, religions, sexes, etc., though of a secondary nature with respect to class contradictions, also await solution.

The proper resolution of these contradictions will begin with the national democratic revolution and will attain its consummation through the subsequent socialist revolution. The objective of the national democratic revolution is to liberate Ethiopia from the yokes of feudalism and imperialism and to lay the foundations for the transition to socialism. But it is necessary to make a proper class analysis of Ethiopian society which is semi-feudal and semi-capitalist and determine the real friends and the real enemies of the national democratic revolution.

In general, the national democratic revolution is a struggle between two broad fronts. On one side, there is the front of the counter-revolution. This front comprises of the feudal class, the comprador bourgeoisie and the bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Imperialism is a partner and supporter of this front. On the other side, the broad front of revolutionary forces is based on the worker-peasant alliance. The petty bourgeoisie is a close friend and ally of this latter front. In addition, there are other oppressed strata of society and progressive and patriotic individuals who have transcended their class and are ready to stand on the side of the revolution. The lumpen proletariat will immensely gain from the revolution. But by its class character, it is possible that it can become an instrument of reactionary forces. Therefore, the revolution should handle the lumpen proletariat with care and caution. As one of the basic features of the national democratic revolution is that it is anti-feudal, its aim is to unite all anti-feudal forces in a struggle for the attainment of genuine democracy for all oppressed classes. And as the national democratic revolution is also anti-imperialist, it also establishes a broad front of all anti-imperialist forces and strives towards the establishment of a society with an independent economic, political and social order. This is why the present stage of our revolution is characterized as the national democratic revolution. Uniting and leading the broad masses through the national democratic revolution is the only road to the transition to socialism.

In the short span of time since February 1974, the revolutionary movement of the Ethiopian people has attained several major victories. On the economic front, all rural land has been nationalized; urban land and extra houses have been put under government control; banks, industries and insurance companies have become public property through various proclamations. These measures have shaken the feudo-capitalist system at its base. On the political front, the major victory is not only the removal of the emperor from power, but also the dealing of death blows to feudal lackeys and thereby the heralding of the complete abolition of the archaic autocratic monarchical rule which has remained the mainstay of feudal Ethiopia. This has also resulted in the awakening of the masses. Socialism has also been declared as the guiding principle of the revolution. And this has opened the way for the public propagation of the socialist world-outlook.

In order to consolidate and give these victories a lasting premise and increase popular participation in the overall revolutionary process, it is imperative that the broad masses be politicized, organized and armed. The Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia, on various occasions, has declared its clear intention to transfer state power to the broad masses. Therefore, in order to enable all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces to organize freely, and in order to establish a united front under the leadership of the working class party which can establish a people's democratic state, the following programme has been issued.

PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION OF ETHIOPIA

SECTION I

Aim of the Programme

1. To completely abolish feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism from Ethiopia and with the united effort of all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces build a new Ethiopia and lay a strong foundation for the transition to socialism.
2. Towards this end, under the leadership of the working class and on the basis of the worker-peasant alliance and in collaboration with the petty bourgeoisie and other anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces, establish a people's democratic republic in which freedom, equality, unity and prosperity of the Ethiopian peoples is ensured, in which

self-government at different levels is exercised and which allows for the unconditional exercise of human and democratic rights.

SECTION II

Contents of the Programme

3. To release the country's productive forces from all feudal and imperialist production relations; to accelerate the economic development of the country in order to raise the standard of living of the broad masses. Since the building of a strong and an independent national economy is possible only through the balanced development of the industrial and agricultural sectors of the national economy, it is necessary to have a centralized national plan based on socialist principles. Such a plan must take agriculture as the foundation of the country's economy and proceed towards establishing light industry that serve the immediate needs of the broad masses. At the same time emphasis will also be given to the establishment of heavy industries which will be primarily based on utilizing the country's national resources. It is a known fact that heavy industry is a prerequisite for a strong national economy. Towards this end, it is necessary:
 - a) to fully implement the revolutionary proclamation that nationalized all rural lands. The government shall ensure the rights of individually owning farmers and at the same time it encourages and shall provide the necessary moral and material support to all cooperative endeavours of the peasant masses. In order to increase the total agricultural output of the country, the government will also establish large-scale farms in different places.
 - b) to strengthen the major industries, banks and insurance companies already under government control and make them more beneficial to the broad masses. And to free the country from imperialist domination, major transport and foreign trade organizations have to be placed under state control.
 - c) to give the necessary incentive to local businessmen and industrialists and to all those citizens engaged in individual enterprises useful for the society. Within the guidelines of the national plan, these groups will be provided with the opportunities to benefit for themselves while contributing to the overall development of the national economy.
4. The enhancement of the welfare of the broad masses of Ethiopia and the entire development of the country depends on the determined effort of the people themselves. It is the determination and the effort of the masses that will pave the future course of the country. But in order to mobilize the energy of the masses for the purpose of increasing production, the following steps need to be undertaken.
 - a) There will be an educational programme that will provide free education, step by step, to the broad masses. Such a programme will aim at intensifying the struggle against feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism. All necessary measures to eliminate illiteracy will be undertaken. All necessary encouragement will be given for the development of science, technology, the arts and literature. All the necessary effort will be made to free the diversified cultures of imperialist cultural domination from their own reactionary characteristics. Opportunities will be provided to allow them to develop, advance and grow with the aid of modern means and resources.
 - b) To ensure full and meaningful life for the broad masses, all the necessary effort will be taken to provide adequate health services.
 - c) Better jobs and employment opportunities will be provided for the jobless and for those employed as servants and housemaids by private persons. Every necessary effort will be taken to allow women to participate fully in productive labour and thereby eliminate prostitution.

- d) All the necessary effort to ensure the welfare of patriots, citizens who have no supporters, and other individuals who have served the society with distinction in diverse ways will be made. Orphans, abandoned children, and the disabled will be given adequate care. Relief shall be provided to help those groups affected by natural disasters such as drought, flood, earthquake, etc.
5. The right to self-determination of all nationalists will be recognized and fully respected. No nationality will dominate another since the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality will have equal recognition in accordance with the spirit of socialism. The unity of Ethiopia's nationalities will be based on their common struggle against feudalism, imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and all reactionary forces. This united struggle is based on the desire to construct a new life and a new society based on equality, brotherhood and mutual respect.

Nationalities on border areas and those scattered over various regions have been subjected to special subjugation for a long time. Special attention will be made to raise the political, economic and cultural life of these nationalities. All necessary steps to equalize these nationalities with the other nationalities of Ethiopia will be undertaken.

Given Ethiopia's existing situation, the problem of nationalities can be resolved if each nationality is accorded full right to self-government. This means that each nationality will have regional autonomy to decide on matters concerning its internal affairs. Within its environs, it has the right to determine the contents of its political, economic and social life, use its own language and elect its own leaders and administrators to head its internal organs.

This right of self-government of nationalities will be implemented in accordance with all democratic procedures and principles.

6. There will not be any sort of discrimination among religions and sexes. No citizen will be accorded special privilege in his or her political, economic and social undertaking on the basis of religion and sex.
7. The role of Ethiopia's armed forces and police is to safeguard Ethiopia's territorial integrity, unity and peace. They will be given all the necessary socialist education that will enable them to fulfill these tasks and protect the welfare of Ethiopia's broad masses. Steps will be taken that during peace time, side by side with the masses, they take active part in production and development areas.

Ethiopia's national interest, unity and integrity ultimately depends on the energy of its broad masses. It is this energy that can ultimately deter all external and domestic enemies. Therefore all the necessary steps to arm and train the masses will be undertaken.

8. All effort will be made to ensure that the rights of Ethiopian nationals living in foreign lands are fully respected. The rights of expatriates legally residing in Ethiopia will also be properly respected and protected.
9. The foreign policy of the country will be guided by the well-known principles of non-aligned nations. These are:
 - a) respect for peace, justice and equality
 - b) non-alignment
 - c) national independence, national unity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Therefore, close and strong collaboration will be established with the sister countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, and with all national liberation movements and other progressive organizations dedicated to the struggle against imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism. The principles of the charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity will be respected. All measures to strengthen ties and collaboration with sister African states, in particular with neighbouring ones, will be undertaken. No effort shall be spared to foster the spirit of good neighbourliness and mutual respect among states.

SECTION III

Immediate Tasks

To attain the above objectives and taking into full account the objective conditions of the country, the broad masses of Ethiopia, united and free from any form of coercion, must be provided with all opportunities to construct a new society. Feudalism, imperialism and bureaucratic capitalism should be defeated as soon as possible. In short, all reactionary forces must be liquidated. Hence, the following steps require immediate implementation.

1. The revolution can advance forward only if the popular masses are made politically conscious, and are organized and armed. But in order to do all these, all sectors of the oppressed classes must be furnished with the opportunity to learn, to teach, to organize and be organized. For all these, it is imperative to put into practice an unrestricted exercise of democratic rights for all anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-bureaucratic capitalist forces. These forces will be immediately accorded full freedom to speak, to write, to assemble, to demonstrate peacefully, to organize and be organized.
2. The national democratic revolution of Ethiopia will be assured of victory if all anti-feudal and anti-imperialist forces unite in a broad revolutionary front. Therefore, all progressive forces will be accorded the freedom to organize and be organized in political parties and in mass organizations as a step towards establishing such a united front. But since final victory by such a united front is only assured when a true proletarian party is organized, strengthened and assumes the full-leadership of the front, the government will extend unceasing assistance to revolutionary groups and individuals struggling to establish such a vanguard party. The necessary moral and material help will be given to all democratic parties, mass organizations and other progressive forces engaged in the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle so as to make such groups contribute to the general struggle of Ethiopia's broad masses.
3. All strata of the broad masses must be organized and become part of the popular revolutionary front. Hence, the need to raise the political awareness of the masses and to organize and arm them. Also, the effort to eliminate the enemies of the masses must inexorably proceed. During this process, the government has the duty to make sure that secondary contradictions that may arise among progressive elements are not taken advantage of by reactionary forces. Otherwise, counter revolutionary forces will have the chance to do all they can to retard the revolution of Ethiopia's broad masses. Therefore, the government will stand by the side of all progressive elements and will take all the necessary measures against direct or indirect attempts by reactionary forces to obstruct the achievements of Ethiopia's revolution. No one will be given the chance to sabotage the revolutionary proclamations and especially those that made rural land the collective property of the Ethiopian people and ended monarchical and feudal rule in Ethiopia.

SECTION IV

Conclusion

As soon as the masses are properly organized and a popular revolutionary front is formed, an assembly which will assume state power will be established. Such an assembly will consist of representatives of parties and popular organizations that have participated in the front. Members of the assembly will be elected democratically and through secret ballot. In accordance with the constitution that such an assembly will approve the people's republic of Ethiopia, under the leadership of the working class party will be declared.

To facilitate these steps, to coordinate the dissemination of the principles of scientific socialism, to aid the anti-feudal, anti-imperialist and anti-bureaucratic capitalist struggle of the broad masses of Ethiopia, and in general to help all efforts of the masses to be organized in order to form a popular revolutionary front, to find ways of advancing the revolution, a Provisional Office For People's Organizational affairs is hereby established.

Acronyms

AEPA	All-Ethiopia Peasant Association
AETU	All-Ethiopia Trade Union
AMC	Agricultural Marketing Corporation
ANLM	AFAR National Liberation Movement
CADU	Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit
CELU	Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions
CHA	Community Health Agents
CMEA	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
COPWE	Commission to Organize a Party of the Workers of Ethiopia
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DFSS	Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECHAT	Ethiopian Oppressed Revolutionary Struggle
EDU	Ethiopian Democratic Union
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
ELF/PLF	Eritrean Liberation Front/Popular Liberation Forces
ELF-RC	Eritrean Liberation Front Revolutionary Committee
ELF-RC	Eritrean Liberation Front Revolutionary Council
ELPA	Ethiopian Light and Power Authority
EMALDH	Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations
EPDM	Ethiopian Peoples' Democratic Movement
EPID	Extension and Project Implementation Department
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRP	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party
ERA	Eritrean Relief Association
ESANA	Ethiopian Students Association in North America
ESR	Educational Sector Review
ETA	Ethiopian Teachers Association
EUNC	Eritrean Unified National Council
EUTA	Ethiopian University Teachers Association
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAO	General Accounting Office
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGADD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development

LLP	Liberal Progressive Party
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory group
MALERID	Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization
MEISON	All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement (<i>Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake</i>)
MPP	minimum package program
MUDH	Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
NDSC	National Defense and Security Council
NFD	Northern Frontier District
NRDC & CPSC	National Revolutionary Development Campaign & Central Planning Supreme Council
NUEUS	National Union of Ethiopian University Students
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
ONCCP	Office of the National Committee for Central Planning
PA	peasant association
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PMAC	Provisional Military Administrative Council
PNDR	Programme of the National Democratic Revolution
POMOA	Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs
RADC	Revolutionary Administrative and Development Committee
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
REWA	Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's Association
REYA	Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association
RRC	Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
TNO	Tigray National Organization
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
UNESCO	United Nations Economic and Social Council
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USUAA	University students Union of Addis Ababa
WPE	Workers' Party of Ethiopia
WSLF	Western Somali Liberation Front

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Index

- Aba Ewestatewos, 25(n21)
 Aba Jifar, 13
 Abe Gobegna, 154
Abiotawi Seded. *See* Revolutionary Flame
 Abir, Mordechai, 159(n9)
 Abyssinia, 24(n15)
 Academy of Ethiopian Languages, 155
 Adal. *See* Afar
 Adal (ras), 25–26(n24)
 Addis Ababa University, 88, 142
 Addis Ababa Water Supply Company, 41
Addis Alem (New World) (Bilatengeta), 154
 Addis Hiwet, 24(n15)
 Addis Tyre, 88
Aemero, 154
 AEPA. *See* All-Ethiopia Peasant Association
 AETU. *See* All-Ethiopia Trade Union
 Afar, 71, 126, 133–134, 169
 Afar Liberation Front, 74
 Afar National Liberation Movement (ANLM), 74
 Afework Gebre-Yesus, 154
 Afework Tekle, 156
 Afghanistan, 177, 184
 "Age of the Princes," 12
 Agew, 11, 132
 Agricultural Marketing Corporation (AMC), 100, 123(n40)
 Agriculture, 7
 collectivization of, 96–97, 98, 202
 development, 83, 85–86, 92–102
 under Haile Selassie, 81, 82(table), 83
 marketing, 100–102
 mechanization of, 86–87
 under military rule, 91, 197
 "minimum package program" (MPP), 86–87
 productivity, 98–100, 101, 107, 108, 119, 123(n39), 124(n59), 202
 reform. *See* Land, reform
 Aklilu Haptewold, 162
 Aksumites, 9, 11
 Aleka Taye, 154
 Alemu Abebe, 64
 Algeria, 162, 173, 185
 Ali Mirah (sultan), 74, 94
 All-Ethiopia Peasant Association (AEPA), 63, 66, 96
 All-Ethiopia Socialist Movement. *See* *Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekanake*
 All-Ethiopia Trade Union (AETU), 53, 63, 193
 Alula (ras), 13
 Alula Abate, 95
 Alvarez, Francisco, 1–2
 Aman M. Andom, 51, 52, 69, 71
 Amanuel Amde Michael, 64
 AMC. *See* Agricultural Marketing Corporation
 Amde Sion, 153
 Amhara, 43, 49(n16), 55, 126, 128, 131, 132, 148, 151, 157
 Amharic, 154
 Andom, Aman M., 46
 Angola, 184, 185
 ANLM. *See* Afar National Liberation Movement
 Aptidon, Hassan Gouled, 167, 169
Aquaquam Bet, 156
 Arab League, 173, 177
 Arab nationalism, 164, 188
 Araya Selassie, 26(n24)
 Arts, 153–157
 Assefa Bequele, 88
 Atnafu Abate, 51, 59
 Australia, 100
Awraja, 95
 Azazh Gera, 156
 Azazh Raguel, 156
 Baalu Girma, 155
 Bahir Dar Textiles Plant, 88
 Bailey, Glen, 102
 Balance of payments. *See* Trade, balance
 Bale rebellion, 32, 40, 47
 Barre, Siad, 69, 166–168, 169, 186

- Beja, 133
 Belgium, 180
 Beni Amer, 133
 Berhanu Bayih, 63, 179
 Bilatengeta Hiruy Wolde Selassie, 154
Birhanena Selam, 16
 Birhanu Zerihun, 154
 Birthrates. *See* Population
 Bitweded Makonnen Indalkachew (ras), 154
 Blata Mersae-Hazen Wolde Kirkos, 154
 Bondestam, Lars, 120(n1)
 Bowen, J. Donald, 160(n22)
 Brietzke, Paul H., 20
 Budget deficits, 114, 115(table), 116, 117(fig.), 118(table)
- CADU. *See* Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit
 Camp David process, 177
 Canada, 100
 Carter, Jimmy, 166, 176, 177, 180
 Castes, 152–153
 Castro, Fidel, 185–186
 Catholicism, 11, 16. *See also* Christianity
 Catholic Relief Service (CRS), 73, 179
 CELU. *See* Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions
 Centralization, 18–20
 Central Planning Supreme Council (CPSC), 116, 120, 197
 CHA. *See* Community Health Agents
Challenge, 37
 Chilalo Agricultural Development Unit (CADU), 86
 Chou En Lai, 187
 Christianity, 1–2, 9, 11, 25(n21), 126, 157, 188
 Christian separatists. *See* Liberal Progressive party
 Civil Code, 147, 161(n29)
 Civil rights, 20. *See also* Human rights
 Clapham, Christopher, 21
 Class, 151–153
 Climate, 6
 CMEA. *See* Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
 Coffee Marketing Corporation, 112
 Cohen, John, 84, 121–122(n18), 160(n22)
 Commercial sector, 103–104, 119
 Commission to Organize a Party of the Workers of Ethiopia (COPWE), 57, 60–62, 193
 Community Health Agents (CHA), 137
 Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU), 35, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 53
 Congo. *See* Zaire
 Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army. *See* Provisional Military Administrative Council
 COPWE. *See* Commission to Organize a Party of the Workers of Ethiopia
 Council of Ministers, 64–66
 Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), 114
 CPSC. *See* Central Planning Supreme Council
 CRS. *See* Catholic Relief Service
 Crummey, Donald, 147
 Cuba, 58, 69, 75, 76, 165, 166, 183, 184–186, 187, 195
 Culture, 128–134. *See also* Ethnicity
 Czechoslovakia, 182
- Dagmawi Menelik* (Menelik II) (Afework), 154
 Danakil. *See* Afar
 Darmar Shoe Factory strike, 40
 David (king of Israel), 1
 Debt, 83, 107, 112, 114, 115(table), 116, 117(fig.), 124–125(n64)
 Decentralization, 67
 Declaration of the Basic Principles of Friendly Mutual Relations and Cooperation, 182
Declaration of the Provisional Military Government of Ethiopia, 91
 Definition of Powers Order, 19
Deggua, 156
 Dejazmach Beyne Baraki, 48(n4)
Democracia, 54
 Democracy, 195–196. *See also* Elections
 Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS), 167, 168
Derg. *See* Provisional Military Administrative Council
 Desertification, 6
 Dessalegn Rahmato, 84, 95, 121(n9)
 Development. *See* Economy, planning
 Development Through Cooperation Campaign, 51, 104
 DFSS. *See* Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia
 Diego Garcia, 177, 178, 183
 Distribution services, 81, 82(table)
 Djibouti, 33, 165, 169–170, 185, 188, 195
 Doctors Without Borders, 123(n47)
 Drought, 36, 78, 196
 agricultural production and, 98, 100, 108, 119
 demography and, 136–137
 government policies, 36, 78, 101–102
 relief commission, 52
 relief efforts, 72–73, 100–102, 124(n50), 168, 178–180, 181, 183–184
 separatist struggles and, 72–73
 Duri Mohammed, 90
 Dynasty of Agew, 11
- East Germany. *See* German Democratic Republic
 ECA. *See* United Nations, Economic Commission for Africa
 ECHAT. *See* Ethiopian Oppressed Revolutionary Struggle
 Ecological zones, 6–7
 Economy, 78–120, 196–197

- diversification of, 83
- growth, 80, 81, 82(table), 87, 107, 108, 111(table), 112, 197
- under imperial rule, 78, 79–90, 118
- performance measurement, 120(n5)
- planning, 79–81, 87, 116, 120, 197, 199, 200
- EDU. *See* Ethiopian Democratic Union
- Education, 141–146, 158
 - under Haile Selassie, 88, 141–142, 144
 - social structures and, 152
 - of women, 149–150, 153
- Educational Sector Review (ESR), 42, 43, 144
- EEC. *See* European Economic Community
- Egypt, 11, 13, 23(n8), 164, 165, 168, 170, 171, 173, 177, 178, 182, 187, 198
- Elections, 52–53, 54, 68
- ELF. *See* Eritrean Liberation Front
- ELF/PLF. *See* Eritrean Liberation Front, Popular Liberation Forces
- ELF-RC. *See* Eritrean Liberation Front, Revolutionary Committee; Eritrean Liberation Front, Revolutionary Council
- ELPA. *See* Ethiopian Light and Power Authority
- EMALEDH. *See* Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations
- Employment, 35–36, 120(n1), 124(n56)
 - policies, 105
 - in public sector, 35
 - of women, 150–151
- Endalkachew Makonnen, 44
- EPDM. *See* Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement
- EPID. *See* Extension and Project Implementation Department
- EPLF. *See* Eritrean People's Liberation Front
- EPRP. *See* Ethiopian People's Revolutionary party
- ERA. *See* Eritrean Relief Association
- Eritrea, 174–175, 195, 198
 - federation of, 30
 - revolt, 39–40, 52, 55, 58, 59, 67, 70–71, 105, 106, 171, 180, 181, 183, 185, 186, 196
 - separatist movement, 15, 30, 31–32, 46, 55, 68, 69–71, 164, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 176, 180
 - unification with, 21, 48(nn 4,8), 164
 - unionists in, 30, 48(nn 4,8)
- Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), 31–32, 70, 167, 172
 - Popular Liberation Forces (ELF/PLF), 77(n14)
 - Revolutionary Committee (ELF-RC), 77(n14)
 - Revolutionary Council (ELF-RC), 77(n14)
- Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), 32, 56, 70, 72, 73, 77(n14), 171, 185, 186
- Eritrean Relief Association (ERA), 73
- Eritrean Unified National Council (EUNC), 77(n14)
- ESANA. *See* Ethiopian Students Association in North America
- Eshetu Chole, 88
- ESR. *See* Educational Sector Review
- ETA. *See* Ethiopian Teachers Association
- Ethiopia-Kenya Border Administration Commission, 168
- Ethiopian Airlines, 174, 175
- Ethiopian Democratic Union (EDU), 58, 170, 180
- Ethiopian Distribution Corporation, 104
- Ethiopian Light and Power Authority (ELPA), 41
- Ethiopian Oppressed Revolutionary Struggle (ECHAT), 57
- Ethiopian Orthodox Church, 3, 7, 9, 16, 18, 126–127, 128, 181
- Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM), 194
- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary party (EPRP), 54–56, 57, 59, 180
- Ethiopian Students Association in North America (ESANA), 37, 55
- Ethiopian Teachers Association (ETA), 35, 42, 44
- Ethiopian University Teachers Association (EUTA), 42, 44
- Ethiopia Tikdem*, 90–91, 192
- Ethnicity, 16–17, 71, 126, 128–134, 148, 151, 157–158, 195–196
- EUNC. *See* Eritrean Unified National Council
- European Economic Community (EEC), 100, 181
- EUTA. *See* Ethiopian University Teachers Association
- Extension and Project Implementation Department (EPID), 86
- Faisal, al-, Faisal Abdel Aziz al-Saud, 164
- Famine. *See* Drought
- FAO. *See* Food and Agriculture Organization
- Fasiledes (emperor), 11
- Fassika Sidelil, 64
- Federal Republic of Germany, 83, 180–181, 186
- Fekkare Yesus* (Explications of Jesus), 153
- Felasha, 132–133, 152, 159(nn 9,11)
- Fellows Mission, 174
- Fetha Negest* (Legislation of the Kings), 153
- Fikre Selassie Wogderes, 59, 63, 64
- Financial sector, 103
- Fisseha Desta, 63
- Fitawrari Habte Giyorgis, 16, 27(n34)
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 86
- Ford, Gerald R., 176
- Foreign policy
 - under Haile Selassie, 162–164

- under military rule, 164–165, 181
- objectives, 163–164
- Foreign relations, 162–188, 197–198
- Four Power Commission, 48(n7)
- France, 14, 17, 162, 169–170, 180, 181
- Franco-Ethiopian Railway strike, 40
- French Somaliland, 33
- Fuga, 152
- Fukera*, 156

- Galla. *See* Oromo
- Garang, John, 172
- Gebre Heywot Baykedagn, 154
- Gebre Kristos Desta, 156
- Geez, 153–154
- Gelawdewos (emperor), 11, 156
- Geography, 3–4, 6
- German Democratic Republic, 75, 169, 182, 186–187
- Getachew Haile, 47(n2)
- Getachew Nadew, 58
- Ghana, 199, 202
- Ghazi, al, Ahmed Ibn. *See* Gragh
- Gilkes, Patrick, 83
- Girmachew, Teklehawaryt, 154
- Glass and Bottle Company, 88
- Gojam tax revolt, 29–30, 40, 46
- Gonderine dynasty, 11–12
- Government Ownership of Urban Lands and Extra Houses, 77(n11), 106
- Gragh (Ahmed Ibn al Ghazi), 11, 154
- Great Britain, 14, 17, 25(n23), 27(n39), 30, 33, 112, 162, 163, 174, 180, 181
- Greater Somalia, 32–33, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 182, 185, 188
- “Greater Tigray,” 47(n2)
- Griffin, Keith, 95
- Gross Domestic Product. *See* Economy, growth
- Growth. *See* Economy, growth
- Gugsa Wolie (ras), 16
- Guidelines on Agricultural Producers’ Cooperatives, 96
- Gult*, 84
- Gurage, 132, 157

- Haddis Alemayehu, 154
- Haddis Tedla, 63
- Hadiya, 132
- Haile Fida, 56, 57
- Haile Selassie, 15–16, 17–23, 26(n34), 27(nn 37,39), 46, 68, 107, 141, 144, 158, 168
 - agriculture under, 81, 82(table), 83
 - coup attempt, 34, 47
 - development programs under, 79–81
 - economy under, 79–90, 103
 - governmental structure under, 20–21
 - foreign policy under, 162–164, 174
 - opposition to, 29–47
 - overthrow of, 45–46, 47
 - power consolidation by, 17–19
 - reform programs under, 19–20, 27(n36), 34–35, 47
- Haile Selassie I University, 88, 142
- Hailu Yimenu, 63
- Hay, Roger, 95
- Health care, 137–138, 158
- Higher Education Commission, 145
- Hitler, Adolf, 162
- Hoben, Allan, 148
- Honecker, Erich, 187
- Housing, 106–107, 141, 158, 196–197
- Human rights, 165, 176
- HVA-Ethiopia, 85, 88

- ICRC. *See* International Committee of the Red Cross
- IGADD. *See* Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development
- Igal, Mohammad I. H., 165
- IMF. *See* International Monetary Fund
- Imperial Guard, 39
- Imperial rule. *See* Haile Selassie; Monarchy
- Imru, Michael, 46
- Income Tax Proclamation (1967), 35
- Income. *See* Wages
- Independence Group, 48(n4)
- India, 174
- Indo-Ethiopian Textiles strike, 40
- Industrialization, 87, 103
- Industrial sector
 - under Haile Selassie, 103
 - under military rule, 103, 104–105, 108, 119
 - productivity, 104–105
- Inflation, 87, 108
- Infrastructure, 9, 87–88, 122(n23), 138, 140
- Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities, 67, 71
- Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD), 167
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 73
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), 112
- Investment, 105–106, 197, 202
 - domestic, 88–89, 92, 104, 106, 116, 118
 - foreign, 88–90, 91, 92, 104, 116
 - governmental, 88, 104
- Investment Committee, 88, 89
- Iran, 177
- Iraq, 173
- Isa, 169
- Islam, 9, 11, 16, 126, 157, 164, 188
- Ismail, Khedive, 15
- Israel, 133, 159(nn 9, 11), 171, 172–173, 188, 190(n24)
- Italian East Africa, 32
- Italian Somaliland, 32
- Italy, 17, 79, 162, 180, 181
 - colonization attempts, 2, 13, 14–15, 23(n8), 30
 - fascist invasion from, 18–19, 141, 154, 163
 - trade with, 83
- Iyasu, Lij, 15, 141

- Iyasu I (emperor), 12
 Iyasu II (emperor), 12
 Iyasu Mengesha, 58
- Jansson, Kurt, 5(photo)
 Japan, 112
 Judicial system, 19, 66, 76–77(n11)
- Kadaffi, al-, Muammar, 172, 173
 Kagnaw Station, 175
 Kassa Gebre, 64
 Kebede Michael, 154
Kebeles, 67–68, 75, 100, 104, 106, 140, 145, 200
 Kembata, 132
Kene Bet, 156
 Kenya, 81, 165, 168–169, 177, 178, 188, 195
 Northern Frontier District (NFD), 33, 169
 Kenyatta, Jomo, 2, 168
Kibre Negest (Glory of Kings), 1, 153
 Kiros Alemayehu, 58
 Korean War, 163, 175, 187
 Kosygin, Alexei, 184
 Kunama, 71
- Labor, 105
 agricultural, 93
 female, 150–151
 wage, 87, 90
 Labor Exchange Offices, 120(n1)
 Labor League, 57
 Labor movement, 35, 40–42, 53
 Labor Relations Board, 41, 42
 Labor Relations Decree, 40, 41, 42
 Land
 reform, 37, 53, 74, 75, 76, 85, 93–95, 96, 98, 123(n36), 148, 196
 tenancy, 84–85, 93, 121–122(n18)
 tenure system, 83–84, 85, 86, 91, 93–94, 121(n9,10), 151–152
 urban, 106
 Land-tax system, 19
 Language of Kings. *See* Amharic
 Languages, 126, 153, 154
 League of Nations, 16, 21, 26–27(n34), 162, 163
 Legesse Asfaw, 63
Leqso, 156
Lesane Negest, 154
 Liberal Progressive party (LLP), 48(n4)
 Liberation movements, 68–74, 167, 185, 195. *See also* entries for individual organizations
Libewoled Tarik (Fiction) (Afework), 154
 Libya, 58, 170, 171, 172, 173, 178, 185, 188
 Lion of Judah, 1
 Lippit, Victor, 199, 201
 Literacy campaign, 146, 149, 160(n24), 196
 Literature, 153–155
 Livestock, 7
- Living standards, 108
 LLP. *See* Liberal Progressive party
 Love, Robert, 87
 Lowenthal, Gloria, 151
- MAAG. *See* United States, Military Assistance Advisory Group
 Maderia, 84
 Mahdi, Sadiq, 172
 Mahdists, 13
 Mahteme Selassie Wolde Meskel, 154
Malba, 97
 MALERID. *See* Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization
 Manufacturing sector
 under Haile Selassie, 81, 82(table), 83, 89
 under military rule, 91, 197, 200
 Mao Zedong, 201
 Markakis, John, 90
 Marxism, 37
 Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization (MALERID), 57
 Matienzo, Eduardo A., 31(photo)
 Mattewos (Abune), 15
 Mecha-Tulema Self-help Association, 32
 MEISON. *See* *Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake*
Mella Ethiopia Socialist Nekenake, 54–57
 Menelik I (emperor), 1, 13
 Menelik II (emperor), 13–15, 16, 17, 25–26(n24), 26(n28), 30, 32, 141, 154
 Mengesha Gugsu (ras), 26(n28)
Mengist, 84
Mengistena Yehizb Astedader (Government and Public Administration) (Gebre), 154
 Mengistu Haile Mariam, 51, 56, 57, 60(fig.), 61, 63, 169, 194, 198, 201
 economy under, 98
 election of, 46
 power consolidation by, 58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 75, 76, 176, 193
 Somali relations under, 69, 167
 Soviet relations under, 183, 184, 186
 U.S. relations under, 179, 180
 Mengistu Lemma, 154
Meshaf Bet, 156
Metshafe Bahriy (Book of Theosophy), 153
Metshafe Birhan (Book of Lights), 153
 Michael (ras), 15
- Military
 force strength, 38, 75, 106, 195
 officer corps, 39, 43
 politicization of, 38–40, 43–45, 75
 rise to power, 42–46, 51, 58, 68, 78, 101, 175, 192, 203(n1)
 stability and, 194, 195
 See also Provisional Military Administrative Council
 Ministry of Agriculture, 86
 Ministry of Health, 137
 Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH), 68, 107

- Mitchell Cotts, 85, 180
 Modernization, 14, 16, 17–18, 21–22, 33–34
 Moges Woldemichael, 93
 Monarchy, 3, 9
 Morocco, 162, 173
 Mortality rates, 136
 Mozambique, 185
 MPP. *See* Agriculture, “minimum package program”
 MUDH. *See* Ministry of Urban Development and Housing
 Musho, 156
 Music, 156–157
 Muslim League, 48(n4)
 Muslims. *See* Islam
 Mussolini, Benito, 163
- Napier, Robert, 25(n23)
 Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 164
 National Academy of the Amharic Language, 155
 National Defense and Security Council (NDSC), 65
 Nationalities, 68–74. *See also* Ethnicity
 Nationalization, 67, 91, 103–104, 105, 106, 108, 119, 180, 196, 198, 199
 social structures and, 152
 U.S. interests and, 178–179, 181
 National Revolutionary Development Campaign (NRDC), 65, 108, 116
 National Security Commission, 45
 National Theatre, 157
 National Union of Ethiopian University Students (NUEUS), 35, 41
 National unity, 68, 71, 185, 195–196
 NDSC. *See* National Defense and Security Council
 Nega Ayle, 90
 NFD. *See* Kenya, Northern Frontier District
 Nigeria, 162
 Nixon, Richard M., 177
 Nkrumah, Kwame, 2
 Nobility, 18, 27(n37). *See also* Monarchy
 Nonalignment, 181
 North Korea. *See* People’s Democratic Republic of Korea
 North Yemen. *See* Yemen Arab Republic
 NRDC. *See* National Revolutionary Development Campaign
 NUEUS. *See* National Union of Ethiopian University Students
 Numeiry, Jaafar, 58, 170, 171, 173
- OAU. *See* Organization of African Unity
 OECD. *See* Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
 Ogaden, 32–33, 39–40, 47, 67, 105, 106, 164, 165, 166, 168, 171, 173, 174, 175, 177, 180, 185, 186, 187, 195, 196
 OLF. *See* Oromo Liberation Front
 Oman, 171, 178
 Operation Moses, 133
 Operation Red Star, 70, 72, 183
 Opposition, 98
 to Haile Selassie, 21, 23, 29–47
 to military rule, 52–53, 55–56, 57–58, 70–74, 75, 103, 105, 106, 192–193, 194–195
 Organization and Consolidation of Peasant Associations, 77(n11)
 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 114
 Organization of African Unity (OAU), 2, 21, 33, 69, 163, 165, 182
 Oromay (Baal), 155
 Oromo, 12, 25(n22), 32, 33, 43, 47, 49(n16), 55, 73–74, 77(n17), 126, 128, 131–132, 148, 151, 157, 159
 Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), 32, 73, 74, 195
 Ottoman empire, 11
- PAs. *See* Peasant associations
 Painting, 155–156
 Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 173, 188
 Pan-Africanism, 164, 165, 187
 Pan-Italy party, 48(n4)
 Pankhurst, Richard, 79, 147
 Pan-Somalism. *See* Greater Somalia
 Peasant associations (PAs), 66–67, 75, 76, 93, 94, 95–97, 98, 100, 119, 123(n36), 145, 200
 People’s Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, xiv, 61
 People’s Democratic Republic of Korea, 187
 People’s Democratic Republic of Oromia, 73
 People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen, 169, 171, 173, 178, 183, 185, 188
 People’s Republic of China (PRC), 187, 199, 201, 202
Physiologus, 153
 Planning. *See* Economy, planning
 PLF. *See* Eritrean Liberation Front, Popular Liberation Forces
 PLO. *See* Palestine Liberation Organization
 PMAC. *See* Provisional Military Administrative Council
 PNDR. *See* Programme of the National Democratic Revolution
 Point Four Program, 175
 Poland, 199
 Politburo, 61–64, 194
 POMOA. *See* Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs
 Popular Liberation Forces. *See* Eritrean Liberation Front, Popular Liberation Forces
 Population, 7, 108, 134–137, 157
 Portugal, 11
 PRC. *See* People’s Republic of China
 Prester John, 1

- Prices, 87, 96, 107, 108, 110(fig.),
123(n41), 202
agricultural, 100
controls on, 104, 108, 119
- Producers cooperatives. *See* Agriculture,
collectivization of
- Productivity, 98–100, 101, 104–105, 107,
108, 119, 123(n39), 124(n59), 201,
202
- Programme of the National Democratic
Revolution (PNDR), 54, 55, 57, 67,
71, 205–210
- Protectionism, 89
- Provisional Military Administrative
Council (*Derg*; PMAC), 45–46,
50(n26), 51–76, 140, 158, 170
agricultural policies, 119
economic policies, 90–91
education under, 144–146
foreign policy under, 164–165, 181
national unity and, 68, 71
opposition to, 52–53, 55–56, 57–58, 70–
74, 75, 103, 105, 106, 192–193, 194–
195
organization, 59–60, 65, 75
priorities, 101–102
reform programs, 118–119, 192–193
rise to power, 42–46, 51, 58, 68, 78,
107, 175, 192, 203(n1)
rural development programs, 92–102
socialist programs, 90–92, 127, 198–203
Soviet relations under, 181–184, 188,
197, 198
urban development policies, 102–107,
119, 140
U.S. relations under, 175–180
- Provisional Office for Mass Organizational
Affairs (POMOA), 54, 57
- Public Ownership of Rural Lands, 76–
77(n11)
- Public sector, 35
- RADCs. *See* Revolutionary Administrative
and Development Committees
- Rationing, 99–100, 104
- Raya-Azebo, 134
- Reagan, Ronald, 178, 179, 180
- Red Sea coast, 48(n6)
- Red Star campaign, 70, 72, 183
- “Red terror” era, 103
- Reform, 108, 118–119, 192
educational, 42
under Haile Selassie, 19–20, 27(n36),
34–35, 47
land, 37, 53, 74, 75, 76, 85, 93–95, 96,
98, 123(n36), 148, 196
under military rule, 118–119, 192–193
- Refugees, 167, 168, 195
- Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
(RRC), 100
- Relief Society of Tigray (REST), 73
- Resettlement programs, 101, 123(n47), 179
- Resources, 7, 9, 91
- REST. *See* Relief Society of Tigray
- Revolution. *See* Military, rise to power
- Revolutionary Administrative and
Development Committees (RADCs),
66–67
- Revolutionary Ethiopia Women’s
Association (REWA), 149, 193
- Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth Association
(REYA), 193
- Revolutionary Flame, 57
- REWA. *See* Revolutionary Ethiopia
Women’s Association
- REYA. *See* Revolutionary Ethiopia Youth
Association
- Rist, 84, 93–94, 121(n10)
- Romanov, Grigory, 183
- Roosevelt, Franklin D., 163, 164, 174
- RRC. *See* Relief and Rehabilitation
Commission
- Rubenson, Sven, 3, 15, 47(n2)
- Rules of Pachomius*, 153
- Russia, 14. *See also* Soviet Union
- Russian Orthodox Church, 181
- Sab, 134
- Sadat, Anwar, 164, 171, 177
- Saho, 133, 134
- Samali, 134
- Saud, Ibn, 164
- Saudi Arabia, 74, 77(n14), 169, 173
- Self-help associations, 77(n17)
- Semon, 84
- Senghor, Leopold, 2
- Separatist movements, 68–74, 167, 185,
195. *See also* entries for individual
organizations
- Settlement patterns, 7
- Sheba, 1
- Shewandagne Belete, 64
- Shilela, 156
- Shimelis Mazengia, 64
- Shortages, 108
- SIDA. *See* Swedish International
Development Authority
- Sidama, 74, 126, 128, 132, 157, 159(n4)
- Sinclair Oil Corporation, 174–175
- Sisay Habte, 58
- Skunder Boghossian, 156
- SNM. *See* Somali National Movement
- Socialism, 53–54, 90–92, 119, 127, 188
Soviet relations and, 182, 183, 187, 198
viability of, 198–203
- Social structures, 151–153
- Solomon (king of Israel), 1
- Solomonic dynasty, 11
- Somali, 126, 134
- Somalia, 74, 81, 165–168, 169, 170, 171,
176, 178, 185, 197, 198
Cuba and, 185, 186
“Greater,” 32–33, 163, 164, 165, 166,
168, 182, 185, 188
Ogaden dispute, 32–33, 69, 165–167,
169, 173, 175, 177, 185
refugees in, 168, 195
Soviet relations, 182

- Somali Abo Liberation Front, 74
 Somaliland, 32, 33, 164
 Somali National Movement (SNM), 167, 168
 South Yemen. *See* People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
 Sovereignty, 2–3
 Soviet–Ethiopian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, 183, 184
 Soviet Union, 170, 171, 175, 179, 202
 drought relief efforts, 100, 183–184
 economic ties to, 181, 183
 Eritrea and, 183
 military ties to, 58, 69, 75, 76, 173, 182, 184, 186, 195, 198
 relations with, 165, 166, 172, 173, 176–178, 179, 181–184, 188, 197, 198
 Somali irredentism and, 182, 187
 Spencer, John H., 162, 163
 SPLM. *See* Sudan People's Liberation Movement
 Stahl, Michael, 121(n18)
 Standards of living, 137
Struggle, 39
 Student movement, 35–38, 41, 42, 44, 52–53, 55–56, 93, 94, 182
 Sudan, 9, 58, 81, 162, 165, 168, 170–171, 173, 178, 182, 187, 188, 195, 197
 Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), 171, 172
 Suez Canal crisis, 35
 Sultan, Ibrahim, 48(n4)
 Susenyos (emperor), 11, 25(n22)
 Sweden, 181
 Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), 86
 Syria, 173, 188

 Tanzania, 185, 199, 202
 Taxation, 35
 Taxi drivers, 42
 Tedla Bairu, 48(n4)
 Teferi (ras). *See* Haile Selassie
 Teferi Bante, 52, 59
 Teka Tulu, 64
 Tekle-Haymanot (Abune), 25(n21), 26(n24)
 Tekle Tsadiq Mekuria, 154
 Telecommunications Board, 41
 Tendaho Cotton Plantation, 85
 Teophilos (Abune), 127
 Tesfaye Dinka, 64
 Tesfaye Gebrekidan, 63
 Tesfaye Wolde Selassie, 64
 Tewodros (emperor), 12–13, 17, 25(n23), 154
 Tigray, 29, 43, 47(n2), 49(n16), 55, 71, 77(n17), 126, 128, 131, 132, 148, 151, 157, 168, 180, 195
 Tigray National Organization (TNO), 71
 Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), 56, 71–73, 167, 194–195
 TNO. *See* Tigray National Organization
 Tona (king of Welamo), 13
 Topiaw (Afewerk), 154
 TPLF. *See* Tigray People's Liberation Front
 Trade, 112
 balance, 81, 83, 107, 112, 113(table), 114(fig.)
 under Haile Selassie, 83, 89–90
 Treaty of Wuchale, 14, 26(n28)
 Trimingham, J. Spencer, 148
 Tsegaye Gebre Medhin, 154
 Tumtu, 152
 Tunisia, 173, 178
 Turkey, 14, 178

 Uganda, 81
 Ullendorff, Edward, 154, 159(n9)
 Uctionists, 25(n21)
 Unemployment. *See* Employment
 Unionists, 18(n4), 25(n21)
 Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations (EMALDH), 57
 United Nations, 21, 163, 164, 187
 Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), 2, 170, 182
 United States, 37, 133, 162, 168–169, 170, 171–172, 173–180, 187, 197, 198
 African Famine Relief and Recovery Act, 178
 Agency for International Development (USAID), 86, 179
 drought relief efforts, 100, 124(n50), 178–180
 economic ties to, 83, 112, 163–164, 174, 175, 178–180, 181, 182
 Hickenlooper Amendment, 178
 Information Service, 177
 Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG), 175, 177
 military ties to, 166, 181, 185, 188
 Naval Medical Research Unit, 177
 Peace Corps, 142, 160(n22), 175
 private investments from, 178–179, 181
 Rapid Deployment Force, 178, 198
 Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, 176
 Unity. *See* National unity
 University College of Addis Ababa, 88
 University Students Union. *See* National Union of Ethiopian University Students
 Urban Dwellers' Association
 Consolidation and Municipalities Proclamation, 77(n11)
 Urbanization, 138–141, 148, 150, 158
 USAID. *See* United States, Agency for International Development

 Victoria (queen of England), 25(n23)
 Villagization program, 97, 179, 190(n39)
Voices of the Masses, 54
 Voluntary Family Guidance Association, 136

 Wages, 87, 90, 108, 109(table), 119, 122(n19), 151
 Watta, 152

- Wedaje Libe* (My Friend, My Heart) (Bilatengeta), 154
Weddase Maryam (Praises of Mary), 153
 Weintraub, Dov, 84
Weland, 97
Welba, 97
Wereda, 95
 Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), 69, 74, 166, 167, 168
 West Germany. *See* Federal Republic of Germany
 Weyane revolt, 29, 47(n2)
 Wez Ader. *See* Labor League
 Woldeab Woldemariam, 48(n4)
 Women, 146–151, 153, 158, 161(n32)
 Wonji Sugar Estate Company strike, 40
 Wonji Sugar Plantation, 85
 Workers' Control Committees, 65
 Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE), 61–64, 75, 149, 184, 193–194, 199
 World Bank, 86, 112, 114
 World Vision, 73
 WPE. *See* Workers' Party of Ethiopia
 WSLF. *See* Western Somali Liberation Front
 Yared (St.), 156
 Yared School of Music, 157
 Yekatit '66 Ideological School, 56
 Yemen, 164. *See also* People's Democratic Republic of Yemen; Yemen Arab Republic
 Yemen Arab Republic, 173
Yethiopia Hizb Tarik (The History of Ethiopian People) (Aleka), 154
 Yoftahe Negussie, 154
 Yohannes IV (emperor), 13, 17, 25–26(n24), 26(n28), 29, 30, 154
 Zagwey dynasty, 11
 Zaire, 163
 Zara Yakob, 153
 Zeffen, 156
 Zema, 156
 Zema Bet, 156
 Zemecha, 51, 52–53. *See also* National Revolutionary Development Campaign
 Zenebework Tadesse, 148
 Zewditu (empress), 15–16, 141

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Westview Press
5500 Central Avenue
Boulder CO 80301
U.S.A.

Avebury Gower Publishing
Company Ltd.
Gower House, Croft Road
Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3HR
U.K.

Jacket photos: *top left*, Mentuab and Fas-
ilides castles, Gonder, Ethiopia (Ethio-
pian Tourism Commission); *top right*,
Ethiopian schoolchildren, 1975 (World
Bank/Ray Witlin); *bottom left*, Ethiopian
artists performing a wedding ceremony,
1987 (courtesy Yohannes Haileyesus);
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Ethiopia (Ethiopian Tourism Commis-
sion).

ISBN {U.S.} 0-86531-426-8
ISBN {U.K.} 0-566-05643-7